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April/May 2020

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MEN'S FITNESS

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

MAN FLU...

As we head into the tissue gathering segment of the year (and we are quite fortunate that we don't have it for too long in South Africa), it's time to double dose on all the essential vitamins and minerals necessary to fight off the dreaded flu. I'm actually nursing what feels like double pneumonia at the moment and as a man, I know factually and medically that this is the sickest any human being has ever been without dying. I've had it a few times over the past few years and somehow manage to survive it, barely. My wife believes it's an extreme over-exaggeration and given that I have yet to succumb she might be onto something. The key really is to just stay ahead of this winter flu, get loads of rest, eat well and take that "warm thing" to gym so you can wear it post-workout. I've recently started a new training regime that's been quite taxing but I was reminded again about how important it is to mix things up. Keep the body guessing and you will keep it growing and changing. This winter, instead of sticking to your normal workouts and hibernating, why not take up a brand new sport? It's the ideal time as classes are generally not overly full, you get special attention from coaches and trainers and who knows, by September you could be next big thing in indoor mountain climbing. In the meantime, I am going to wrestle the man flu, someone repay my wife for waiting on me hand and foot because I am just not capable of life at the moment, nevermind deciding which sport I'll specialise in before September.

Enjoy this issue.

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JESSICA KING
Peloton Instructor, New York City

Hard-hitting news from the cutting edge of modern research

BREAKTHROUGHS

Swingers Live Longer (Swimmers and Cyclists, Too).

Which type of cardio gets you the healthiest and keeps you alive the longest? Curious exercise researchers at the University of Sydney examined 11 different health surveys on more than 80 000 people (average age: 52) over 9 years and found that, amazingly, those who'd played racquet sports like tennis, racquetball, or squash in the previous month had a 47% lower risk of early death. And that's not all: Enthusiasts who swung a racquet regularly also showed a 56% drop in cardiovascular disease. It's believed that this type of full-body exercise, which features short bouts of high-intensity effort, helps you live longer by boosting your metabolism and strengthening your heart. Swimming, a great whole-body workout, came in second, with aerobics in third place and cycling in fourth. Surprisingly, neither soccer nor running seemed to significantly reduce premature death. To court longer life, pick up a racquet and add the sport of kings to your cardio routine – it will serve you well.

– ADAM BIBLE

BEST WORKOUT MOTIVATION: BEATING SOMEONE'S ASS.

Bring it, bro: Competition gets you to the gym

Been slacking off instead of hitting the gym and throwing up some iron? Get yourself an enemy to go after. Okay, not an enemy, exactly, but someone who can give you some stiff competition. That's the very best motivation to work out, according to US University of Pennsylvania researchers who found that, rather than a cheering section, you need to feel a sense of competitiveness to be extremely consistent with your workouts. Their study, an 11-week weightlifting, running, spinning, and yoga program involving 790 students, showed that exercisers who competed for the top spot on leaderboards had 90% higher gym-attendance rates than those in groups in which competition wasn't emphasised. So, if you're feeling less than excited about crushing it these days, challenge one – or a whole gang – of your gym buddies to a duel and watch the gains start rolling in.

WORKING OUT MAKES UP FOR BINGE EATING (WELL, A WEEK OF IT)

The ill effects of a brief eating binge can be offset by exercise, says a small study out of the University of Michigan, USA. In it, four subjects (hey, we said it was a small study) who ate 30% more calories for a week — but still did 150 minutes of cardio and worked out six days — had none of the insulin resistance/inflammation that pigging out usually causes.

SHOCKING EXERCISE NEWS!

In November 2016, our US counterparts wrote about transcranial direct-current stimulation (tDCS), a new brain-stimulation treatment that seems to boost exercise capacity. (Check it out at mensfitness.com/tdcs.) And, boy, were they ahead of the curve. In a study at the University of Kent in the UK, nine guys in their 20s did leg extensions at about 20% of their max; but when tDCS electrodes jolted their heads with a tiny bit (2 milliamps) of juice, their perceived effort lessened, allowing them to exercise about 15% longer. You can buy a tDCS device at wantitall.co.za but ask your doctor first.

RUN FOR IT (BUT HEEL-TOE OR TOE-HEEL?)

Many runners believe that landing on the ball of the foot is better than adjusting to a heel-first gait, assuming that going balls-first will cushion the impact better. Not so: A study in the *Journal of Sports Sciences* discovered that when runners switch up their style, there's no change in the amount of force from one method to the other – the impact is just redirected through the body.

Ask Men's Fitness

Some studies claim fitness trackers are useless, while others say they're great for your health. What's the lowdown?

CALEB R, JOHANNESBURG

A fitness tracker *can* work – *if* you actually use it.

Like any new tech, trackers have their pros and cons, so nailing down benefits is tricky, says Kelly Evenson, PhD, a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the US, and the closest thing to a human fitness-tracker "tracker" there is. For example, one recent study she did suggested that trackers don't improve health; but her newest research shows they can, indeed, lower heart disease risk – but only if used faithfully. For max usefulness, she says, wear it in the same position every day, update software often, and pair it with benefit-boosting apps.

Carnivores have no advantage over veggie eaters in muscling up.

Vegetarians build as much lean muscle

Getting plenty of protein post-workout is key to speeding muscle growth and aiding recovery – but what type of protein is best? To find out, researchers at the Arizona State University in the US tracked the diet and workout habits of 70 elite endurance athletes – 43 meat eaters and 27 vegetarians. And surprise! At study's end, the veggie eaters had virtually the same lean muscle mass as the carnivores and just as much leg strength. And though the groups' VO2 max scores showed they were equally fit, the vegetarian women's numbers were 13% better. The take-home: If you're getting the right amount of protein per day (1.2 to 1.6 grams per kilogram of body weight), it doesn't matter what form it comes in – plant, animal, or supplement.

CROSS VS. CLANK: WHICH GETS YOU FITTEST?

CrossFitters and weightlifters often clash over which workout is best – and now we know. Sort of. In a new study in the Journal of Exercise Physiology, 13 seasoned CrossFitters and 13 iron junkies were put through a barrage of tests, including pull-ups, shuttle runs, and explosive jumps. Who won? Well, no one, really. Each group excelled in whatever played to their regimen: CrossFit folks had more endurance, lifters more strength. So mix it up to get the best of both worlds – fitness snobs always lose out in the end.

SIZE DOESN'T MATTER IN MUSCLES

That guy with the ungodly big, bulging bi's? He's not necessarily stronger than you are.

That's the upshot of a review in *Muscle & Nerve* that concluded that the link between post-workout muscle size and muscle strength is tenuous at best.

In fact, scientists noted, even when you lose muscle mass after time off, strength often sticks around.

Take that, Hulk.

SHORT, EXPLOSIVE MOVES ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE

If you do want to build strength in your muscles, the best way to do it is through short, explosive contractions lasting less than a second. In a new study in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, researchers found that short exercises are not only less tiring and easier, they also build more strength than longer, sustained contractions.

Ask Men's Fitness

My weightlifting partner is really erratic about getting to the gym, and it's driving me crazy. Any idea what's going on or what I should do?

JOE W, BLOEMFONTEIN

What makes a great (or lousy) gym pal? What's in his head.

Peter Yang

Your buddy's reasons for exercising may be the problem. Impulsive gymgoers are most often motivated by feelings of pressure, guilt, or shame about their bodies, the Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research reports. If those thoughts plague him, it's going to be tough for him to stay consistent. "The gym should be seen as a thing of value, not a chore or punishment", says study author Dave Keatley, PhD. If your pal's impetus to work out is negative ("I look awful"), not positive ("I'm doing something great!"), you may need a new partner.

Health
Breakthroughs

TO SLEEP SMART, CUT BLUE RAYS ALL DAY

Getting enough good sleep is one of the best ways to stay fit and healthy. So hear this: The more screen time you put in on your smartphone, computer, or tablet — all day, not just near bedtime — the poorer and shorter your sleep will be, say US University of California, San Francisco scientists, who analysed data on 600-plus subjects. The culprit: Blue light emitted by screens, which hinders the sleep hormone melatonin. To fight the blues, block rays from your phone or computer with an app from *justgetflux.com* or *twilight.urbanandroid.org*.

GERMS MAKE HUGE ATM DEPOSITS

An American New York University sample of 66 New York City ATMs found their keypads to be teeming with bacteria. Luckily, though, most are harmless types that thrive on skin and home surfaces. No, the real evildoers are inside the ATMs, the researchers say: The cash the machines spit out is rife with more than 3000 types of bacteria. Many are linked to acne (collective shudder), but some are deadly antibiotic-resistant strains. So, consider your hands tainted after withdrawals — or, better yet, just swipe your card instore instead.

Ask Men's Fitness

I love to hit the golf course on the weekends, but my gym-loving buddies say I'm not getting any real exercise. Am I wasting my time?

Any consistent exercise is good for you – even golf, according to new data out of the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, where golf was born back in the 1400s. The study, the largest and most systematic review ever done, found that golfers live longer than non-golfers and are in better health overall, says author Andrew Murray, MD. "Golf is a great choice for longevity, physical, and mental benefits – and you can play it from age 3 to 103", Murray says. Just ditch the cart and carry your clubs: An 18-hole round can burn 1200 calories, compared with 600 for cart jockeys.

Get on the ball: Golfers live longer than non-golfers.

Daily posing can lower your risk of stroke and heart disease.

Yoga lowers blood pressure

Push blood pressure downward with daily yoga sessions.

Thanks to the good folks at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States we know that about 75 million Americans have – and 59 million more are on the verge of developing – high blood pressure, which can dramatically increase heart disease and stroke risk. Those are some scary numbers, even for us here in sunny SA. Of course, if you think or have been told that you're at risk, taking sensible steps like quitting smoking and exercising can help stave off high BP, also known as hypertension. But if you'd like to be even more proactive, try yoga: A new study presented to the Cardiological Society of India shows that practising hatha yoga an hour a day for a month can lower blood pressure even more than lifestyle changes. In the study, the yogis, who did stretching poses and breathing exercises, had a huge drop in diastolic BP (pressure while your heart is resting) over 24 hours, from a dangerously high 81 to a normal 76. A decrease that drastic could lower stroke risk by 15% and heart disease by 6%.

BREATHE THROUGH YOUR NOSE!

The way you breathe throughout the day and while exercising can calm your body and mind and help them both perform better. Yet proper breathing is one of the most overlooked methods of improving health. Now there's even more evidence that breathing right is important: In research at Northwestern University in the US, subjects who inhaled through their noses were able to recognise fearful faces faster and remember images better than when they were exhaling or inhaling through their mouths. Researchers believe rapid ("panicky") nasal inhalation synchronises brain areas to make us more aware of our surroundings. For respiration tips, go to breathing.com.

Juliachka/Getty

Broccoli can help head off the ageing process.

Broccoli: a pep stalk from Mother Nature

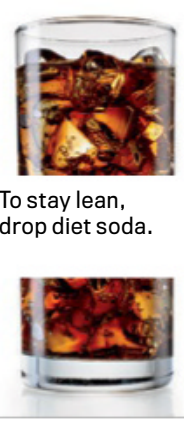
Love broccoli or hate it, you'll probably be wanting more of it once you read this. Packed with tons of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidant phytonutrients that help you stay fit and trim, broccoli also contains niacin (alias "vitamin B3"), which helps create an enzyme called NMN (for nicotinamide mononucleotide). Now an American study conducted on mice at the Washington University School of Medicine has revealed that the NMN in broccoli **helps your body use energy more efficiently, slows age-related weight gain, boosts eyesight, and improves insulin sensitivity.** In other words, it staves off many of the negative effects of ageing. Even as the NMN-munching study mice got older, their metabolism and energy levels remained comparable with that of younger, friskier rodents. Can't stand broccoli? You can still reap the benefits of NMN by eating foods like chicken, pork, tuna, mushrooms, peppers, and peanuts, which are also extremely rich sources of niacin.

Ask Men's Fitness

I've picked up a diet soda habit, but now I'm hearing that the diet stuff is almost as bad as the regular. Is that true?

SAM R, DURBAN

Seems so, Sam. Research increasingly shows that sugar substitutes fail to do their job – that is, prevent obesity and diabetes, says Richard Hodin, MD. Case in point: Hodin's latest study found that, in the stomach, aspartame actually blocks an intestinal enzyme that helps protect us from gaining weight. And it's not just aspartame. Multiple studies show that, across the board, sugar substitutes tend to promote obesity, plump up belly fat, and, basically, keep you fat. Hodin's advice: Stick to water.



To stay lean, drop diet soda.

SCIENCE SAYS: LOSE WEIGHT 3 HEALTHY NEW WAYS

Have dinner earlier. Stop eating around mid-afternoon, and don't start again till morning. "Restricted feeding" cuts appetite and ups fat burning at night, say researchers from the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in the US.

Go low carb once a week. Eating just three low-carb meals in a 24-hour period lowers your insulin resistance, say US scientists from the University of Michigan. This helps your body burn more fat and protects it against high bp, pre-diabetes, and diabetes.

Pretend you're watching yourself stuff your face. To drop kilograms, try a little mental imagery, says a new report from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Seeing yourself from an external perspective could help you put on the brakes.

YO-YO DIETING MAY BE A GUT REACTION

After Israeli researchers put mice through a cycle of weight loss and gain, they found that the rodents' systems all returned to normal but one: Their microbiomes (germ colonies) stayed in "obese" mode for six extra months, Nature reports. It seems the little guys' guts remembered obesity fondly and sped up weight gain when off the diet. The finding may lead to treatments to combat yo-yo dieting. Till then, fortify your gut with plenty of probiotic (yoghurt, kimchi) and prebiotic (asparagus, onion) foods.

OLDER CHEESE HELPS YOU GET OLDER

A compound in aged cheeses may help keep you alive longer, says Nature Medicine. Italian researchers found that subjects who ate higher amounts of mature cheese had 40% less risk of heart failure. The compound, spermidine (also abundant in soybeans and mushrooms), was first isolated from semen, winning it our award for "Most Unappetising-Sounding Health Boon Ever".

From top: Levi Brown/Trunk Archive; Getty

ON TOP

Everything you need to make life work for you

I hated every minute of training, but I said, ‘Don’t quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.’

Muhammad Ali

Enter the ring

Boxing checks off all the right training criteria: It's anaerobic! Muscle toning! Core sculpting! And whether they're grimy or sparkling, boxing gyms have become beacons of total-body fitness. Plus, you'll never have more fun hitting things with all your might. Ready to go a few rounds? Step this way.

By Mike Woods
Photograph by James Ryang

B

Boxing gyms have come a long way from the gritty, dank caves Rocky prowled in Philly's predawn hours. Just as we had the luxury-climbing-gym revolution last year – when men skipped the treadmill to flex their bouldering skills – we're now witnessing an explosion of ultra-high-end boxing temples. Leading the way are US-based Box 'N Burn Boxing and Fitness, Chicago's Unanimous Boxing Gym, and, most recently, the gleaming Rumble, which opened a 550-plus-square-metre location in New York City this last January. At this knockdown palace, which is partly co-owned by a former Google executive and a master trainer from Bravo's *Work Out New York*, you can work on full-body toning while hitting an aqua heavy bag, which is much easier on the joints and tendons. "Our clients don't just punch a bag for 45 minutes. We have weights and benches", says Eugene Remm, a head of the EMM Group and a Rumble co-owner. "Add our overall cleanliness, and nobody thinks 'boxing'." We totally approve of the rise in boxing gyms, and not just because we've seen *Creed* too many times. Boxing isn't just about fighting – it's a great workout that boosts mental agility, improves co-ordination, and blends cardio and muscle sculpting. "Boxing is the only sport where you have to stay on your feet the whole time to be successful," says Eric Kelly, a four-time US amateur national champion who now trains clients in NYC. "Meanwhile, you've got to keep a guy's foot out of your ass. That requires every muscle in the body!" Here's what you need to know before you step into the ring.

Pugilist 101

The beginner's guide to picking a boxing gym

Before you can pull on the gloves, you need to find the right place – and the right trainer.

You've hit YouTube, and after watching highlights of Mike Tyson knocking heads into the cheap seats, you're amped to learn the ropes. Now what?

"Start by going to a reputable gym", says Heather Hardy, the WBC international featherweight champ. What constitutes as "reputable" depends on your personal preference. The gym doesn't have to be beautiful – it can be a hole-in-the-wall reeking of Bengay, with heavy bags wrapped with duct tape.

Next, find a trainer. "Let the owner know if you're interested in competition or fitness", says Hardy. Then ask about style: Do you respond better to an earful of growls from a grizzled vet, or pats on the butt from a gentler soul? Make sure the gym trains "white-collar types", and steer clear of anyone lacking ring time. "I don't take the 'no fighting experience' trainers as seriously", says Kelly. "Ever heard of a swimming instructor who hasn't been in the water?"

And don't be intimidated. The camaraderie found in boxing gyms is second to none, and most boxers are chill cats who are happy to share tips. From the banker throwing soft punches to the welterweight prospect fighting on HBO next week, they're all there to better themselves. "It's one of America's last true melting pots", says Bruce Silverglade, owner of Gleason's Gym in Brooklyn, USA.

YOUR TOTAL-BODY BOXING WORKOUT

The beauty of boxing workouts is that you can still become a mini Mayweather whether you make it to the gym or not. Done right, this boxing workout will eventually transform you into a Golden Gloves god.

Group gigs are great for Spinning, but in the boxing space? There's something to be said for starting out by yourself and locking down the basics. But if you're not sure you'll like the sport at all, consider taking a few group classes – they are cheaper, have some nice camaraderie, and can provide a good intro. "One-on-one is best", says Kelly. "You get all the attention. Your trainer can focus on technique and make sure you ain't just staring at asses and being lazy."

STEP 1
Stretch

No muscle goes unused, so spend five to 10 minutes before the bell rings stretching every body part. Work those hamstrings: Stand straight and bend over, with your fingers touching the floor. To prevent tearing your shoulder muscles, place your hand against a wall and lean away, which stretches the fibres.

STEP 2
Jump rope

Jumping rope is crucial to building the quickness and agility you'll need to be a ring king. Start out jumping with both feet, then gradually alternate, jumping five on the left and five on the right. Only after you master that will you be co-ordinated enough to jump back and forth between right and left.

STEP 3
Shadowbox

This drill helps you learn to stay balanced when you punch. It also puts your hammies, adductors, quads, and calves to work as you move laterally. Start with three rounds, sliding and popping combos – which helps refine your evasion techniques – while picturing a foe in your face. You'll eventually be able to shadowbox for 15 minutes (five rounds) and in the process build a toned trunk.

STEP 4
Hit the heavy bag

Learn how to control your "foe" with a jab while also working your core and hips, from which you'll transfer power to your punches. "The power comes from the ground up," says Kelly, "and the core must be strong to get the right velocity behind each punch." Aim for heavy bags attached to a chain, rather than those connected to the wall – the swinging helps hone your body movements.

As you hit the bag for three to four rounds, make sure to snap the punch before you bring the hand back.

STEP 5
Hit the speed bag

Fast-twitch muscles pop as the speed bag goes rat-a-tat. The goal is to build combos, which will improve shoulder strength and train you to keep your hands high. Besides helping you get some killer shoulders, practising the speed bag is for rhythm, timing, and relaxation. Punches shouldn't be thrown with flexed muscles – relax your arm to keep a steady rhythm, which translates to a more fluid motion. Don't "punch" the bag; it's as if your hand were holding a bicycle pedal moving in a continuous circle, hitting the bag every time it gets to the top. To improve your accuracy and head movement, sub in a double-end bag.

Avoid this fate by slipping, or ducking, the next roundhouse that comes your way.

HOW TO TAKE A PUNCH

About to get clocked? Here's how to avoid hitting the mat. Keep your eyes open – don't blink – and focus on your opponent's chest to spot any muscle movements that'll indicate an incoming bell ringer. Next, "slip" the punch, which means moving your head to the side – that way, you'll deflect the hook's full force. Finally, tuck your chin. This is a matter of discipline, but it's the best way to prevent an embarrassing TKO.

Boxing gym essentials

Everlast 120" Hand Wraps

These wraps will keep your phalanges and metacarpals from splintering. And the polyester-nylon material is breathable, so they won't get too stanky too quickly.

Everlast Powerlock Hook & Loop Gloves

Versatile enough for bag work and even sparring, Powerlock gloves are constructed entirely of a proprietary foam that grips every contour of your fist while absorbing shock upon impact.

Reebok Boxing Boot-Buck

The go-to boxing shoe for ankle support and style. You'll get good traction while doing the Ali shuffle – and at the right price point for the average Joe Boxer.

Clockwise from top left: Jorg Badura; United Artists/Photofrest; Nick Ferrari; Prop styling by Rachel Stickley/Bernstein & Andriulli

Change the pace!

Varying the tempo of your workout can bring huge improvements in strength and power

By Pete Williams,
Photographs by James Michelfelder

You'll achieve that extra power boost you've always coveted if you toss the medicine ball at just a modest pace.

When it comes to setting personal records in the weight room, it's natural to focus on sets, reps, and weight. But most athletes give little thought to tempo – the cadence at which a movement pattern is performed. Enter tempo training, which was popularised years ago by strength coach Ian King but has resurged. And no wonder: Changing up tempo can produce dramatic results, including increased strength, power, and size. It can also help you bust through plateaus by mixing up stale routines that no longer generate results. "By varying the speed, you trigger a response that creates muscle growth", says Ken Croner, owner of US-based Munster Sports Performance in Indiana. What's more, being aware of your tempo ensures a more mindful workout, an antidote to all the digital distractions that's made it difficult for athletes – like everyone else – to concentrate on the rep at hand. "Focusing on your lifting tempo forces you to think about what you're doing", says Croner. Muscular and mindful? Can't beat that.

Styling by Barret Wertz; Grooming by Casey Geren/Bernstein & Andriulli using Laura Mercier; Fitness Tech: Jeb Stuart Johnston

Brad Swonetz

SLOW DOWN TO BUILD STRENGTH

Athletes typically lift at a steady pace, powering through the eccentric (lowering), isometric (holding), and concentric (raising) portions of a lift. But greater gains require a change of pace. A slower tempo increases a muscle's time under tension (TUT) for each rep. The greater the TUT (on the lowering or holding portion), the greater the stress on the muscles; that leads to optimum hypertrophy, or muscle building. As a bonus, this speed encourages proper form. A push-up is more effective if you spend three to four seconds lowering yourself and one to two seconds holding just above the floor before powering back up. There's additional TUT, and the slower movement recruits more shoulder stabiliser muscles and better engages the core. A squat becomes extra challenging if your eccentric phase takes 10 seconds, which adds 100 seconds to a 10-rep set and raises the TUT tenfold. Plus, squatting — more than any other move — is about execution, and a slower tempo forces you to squat properly. Tempo training even applies to thrusters, the popular CrossFit move: Slow down in the squat portion before exploding into a shoulder press. Beyond the greater TUT, this encourages proper form. A criticism of CrossFit is that it emphasises speed at the expense of form, and some athletes, especially newbies, aren't ready for ballistic movements. A slower tempo yields a correctly performed lift.

Anthony Hobgood of Exos in Gulf Breeze, Florida, USA, recommends slow-tempo training with pull-ups. This increases TUT and stops the natural tendency of using a body's momentum to get through a set, boosting the number of pull-ups an athlete can do.

SAMPLE WORKOUTS

These can be done on their own or consecutively

Slower-tempo workout

>10 push-ups: 4 seconds down, 2 seconds hold, 1 second up

>10 squats: 6 seconds down, 1 second hold, 1 second up

>5–10 pull-ups (depending on ability): Starting from the bar, 2 seconds down, 2 seconds (hold at bottom), 2 seconds (hold at top)

Faster-tempo workout

Do these as fast as possible:

>10 bench presses using 40% of 1RM

>10 squat jumps using body weight

>10 medicine ball rotational throws using modest weight

SPEED UP TO INCREASE EXPLOSIVENESS

On the other hand, working at a faster tempo with less weight is better when training for power. A quicker pace increases the body's ability to handle rapid stretch loads; the faster movement also lengthens your fascia's elastic properties, causing muscles to contract more forcefully. Focus on moderate resistance — 60% of a one-rep max — and maintain a high effort while moving quickly. The end of a set shouldn't feel harder than the beginning. Have a 140kg bench max? Load just 80kg and blast through all three phases. Or do a squat jump using just your body weight. For both workouts, you're combining speed and strength.

FOR A NEW PR, MIX UP THE TEMPO

Alternating between various tempos will not only help you break through plateaus, it'll lead to a more focused workout and a more efficient gym session overall. "Tempo is so valuable because it serves so many goals", Hobgood says. "You know the moves; this just changes things up to improve results."

Eat to Win

The diet of Ikaria, Greece, "the island where people forget to die", features tomatoes, wild mushrooms, and wild greens.

Forever fuel

WANT TO LIVE TO BE 100? THE PEOPLE IN SEVEN AREAS AROUND THE WORLD DO JUST THAT – AND WE HAVE THEIR SECRETS.

BY NILS BERNSTEIN PHOTOGRAPHS BY LINDA XIAO

On the menu in Okinawa: brown seaweed, pork, and bitter melon, which looks like ugly cucumber.

C

Can you eat your way to a long life? People in a handful of regions across the globe apparently do. Author Dan Buettner identified seven so-called "blue zones" – places where residents often live past 100 – and analysed the factors that may explain it. Along with lifestyle, nutrition is key. So pick some favourites from each and start beating the odds!

IKARIA, GREECE

Called "the island where people forget to die" in Diane Kochilas' cookbook on its food, Ikaria is a hotbed of old-agers who follow a Med-type diet but eat less meat than most Greeks; farm or forage many foods; and proudly admit they f#ck like bunnies into their twilight years.

KEY FOODS: Wild greens, olive oil, chickpeas, lentils, black-eyed peas, lemons, goat-milk cheese, potatoes, tomatoes, wild mushrooms, sage, rosemary

DISH TO TRY: *Hortopita:* phyllo pie made with wild greens

OKINAWA, JAPAN

Why such longevity among Okinawans? It could be their superfood intake: Turmeric is a favourite here, as is go-to veggie bitter melon — both thought to be disease fighters. Most foods are stir-fried quickly in minimal oil.

KEY FOODS: Brown seaweeds (hijiki, wakame, kombu), bitter melon, turmeric, tofu, sweet potato, lots of all forms of pork, garlic, green tea, brown rice

DISH TO TRY: *Goya chanpuru:* stir-fried bitter melon, egg, tofu, and thinly sliced pork

HOW TO LIVE (ALMOST) FOREVER

The basic principles followed by citizens of "blue zones"

The diet

- Plant-based, though not entirely vegetarian
- Lotsa legumes– beans, lentils, peas
- Mostly organic and local
- Heavy on whole grains

The lifestyle

- Not much smoking
- Close family connections
- Regular social engagement
- Constant moderate physical activity

SARDINIA, ITALY

Carbo-loading for long life? Sardinians eat gobs of pasta and whole-grain breads — even their famed soup, zuppa gallurese, is a sort of bread casserole. It could be the omega-3s they get from shellfish and dairy or the crazy-high polyphenols in the local red wine...

KEY FOODS: Shellfish (clams, mussels, lobster); sheep's/goat's milk; tomatoes, almonds, fava beans, chickpeas, flatbread, saffron, fennel, red wine

DISH TO TRY: *Fregola sarda con arselle e zafferano:* semolina pasta with clams and saffron

SOUTHERN SWEDEN

Scandinavia's quality of life (low crime, free health care) offers some non-dietary reasons for long lives. Still, something about the hearty cuisine of Sweden's Öland, Småland, and Skåne (their flavonoid-packed black currants, perhaps?) keeps them hanging on.

KEY FOODS: Oily fish like salmon and herring, whole grains like rye and buckwheat, berries, peas, oats, yoghurt, root vegetables

DISH TO TRY: *Fiskbullar med rotmos och ärtor:* fish cakes with mashed rutabaga and peas

NICOYA, COSTA RICA

This Costa Rican peninsula's diet is similar to the rest of Latin America's but with a few key differences: The fruit of its peach palm tree is said to fight cancer, and its wild ginger is a potent anti-inflammatory. Plus, little milk or processed food is consumed.

KEY FOODS: Black beans, corn tortillas, winter squash, ginger, eggs, yucca, plantains, yams, tropical fruits (bananas, papaya, mango, guava, peach palms)

DISH TO TRY: *Gallo pinto:* rice, black beans, fried egg, and corn tortillas

Food styling by Hadas Smirnoff; Prop styling by Maeve Sheridan

Loma Linda's Seventh Day Adventists thrive on fresh foods, whole grains – and not an ounce of meat.

Grazie, Rosemary!

The diet of the seventh "blue zone", the Italian coastal town of Acciaroli, is like that of most of southern Italy, but with one addition: wild rosemary, eaten all day, every day. The local herb's intense aroma suggests it has even more antibacterial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and circulatory and memory-boosting properties than ordinary rosemary. Bonus: Dried rosemary retains most of the nutrients of fresh.

Tip

Buy organic rosemary to avoid nutrient-killing irradiation.

LOMA LINDA, CALIFORNIA, USA

Loma Linda has one of the world's largest concentrations of Seventh Day Adventists, who — believing the body and soul to be one — spurn meat, most rich foods, booze, cigs, and caffeine. But some do eat fish — and, sorry, Adventist vegans, but pesco-vegetarian Adventists live longer than you do.

KEY FOODS: Whole grains (oats, barley, quinoa), beans, lentils, peas, chickpeas, citrus, whole-wheat bread, almonds, soy milk, salmon, avocado

DISH TO TRY: Black-bean burger with avocado and tomato

Españain a pan

CREATE AN INCREDIBLY HEARTY, PROTEIN-PACKED ONE-POT FEAST BY UPDATING THE MOST DELICIOUS (AND ICONIC) OF ALL SPANISH DISHES – PAELLA – WITH A HEALTHY WHOLE GRAIN

BY TOBY AMIDOR / PHOTOGRAPH BY LINDA XIAO

The dish paella (pronounced pa-AY-yuh) is actually named for the shallow cooking pan in which it's made and served. Paella originated in Spain, where centuries ago farmers would throw together white rice and any proteins they could find, and cook them over an open fire in the fields where they worked. Over time, paella evolved into a masterpiece of Spanish cuisine: A dish typically made with white rice; a variety of seafood (shrimp! mussels! lobster!) and/or meat (chicken, chorizo); a flavour base (sofrito) of garlic, onions, peas, and tomatoes; and a sprinkling of saffron. But white rice isn't the optimum carb for health-conscious guys; and what's a meal without plenty of veggies? So we've put together this better-for-you paella by swapping out rice for quinoa, the king of whole grains, and adding tasty edamame – a nutritious green soybean – to make a healthy, protein-rich meal that's lower in carbs, calories, fat, and sodium. And for four more great veggie-boosted paellas using quinoa, farro, buckwheat and sorghum.

Saffron may be expensive, but this tasty, healthy spice is worth the price.

Exotic Saffron Packs a Punch (in more ways than one)

Just a bit turns a boring plate into a memorable meal. And luckily for your wallet, a little goes a long, long way.

Think of saffron as the truffle of the spice kingdom. The fragrant red strands, harvested from the stigma of the saffron crocus flower and then cured, are essential to the flavour of many Spanish dishes. But saffron isn't just powerfully tasty, it's also mega-healthy, packed with a carotenoid called crocin — an antioxidant that helps fight cancer, stabilise blood sugar, and promote memory retention. Since saffron is also one of the priciest spices you'll ever come across you'll want to exercise restraint when you use it — which isn't difficult to do, since just a bit will be plenty for pretty much any dish. According to Alex Raij, Chef and Co-owner of US-based NYC's La Vara restaurant, always buy whole strands of saffron, not the pre-ground variety, which might be cut with marigolds. Ugh. How to use saffron: Before adding it to a dish, crumble the strands in your fingers so the fragrance is distributed evenly. It's particularly tantalising when added first to a pan of sizzling oil, which really wakes up a dish, Raij says. Store it in an airtight container in a cool, dry place.

EXPERT TIP

Pull a rabbit paella out of your hat

Want to make a super authentic paella from Valencia, Spain, the proud birthplace of this ultra-versatile dish? Then head straight for the rabbit. Top chefs often name famous Spanish chef Josefa Navarro's simple rabbit paella as the best paella in the world; and many American students studying in Valencia have been welcomed their first day with a traditional rabbit paella, cooked over an open fire and bestowed upon them by their host family as if it were a gift from the Spanish magi. And cooked right, it is. Because rabbit isn't just delicious – it tastes a bit like chicken (no kidding) but with a slightly "wilder" flavour. It's also a nutritional slam dunk: A super lean meat, it has more protein and less fat than chicken, veal, turkey, lamb, beef, and pork and half the calories of lamb or beef. If you don't have a local butcher who sells rabbit, you can swop out rabbit for something a little easier to find, like say, chicken.

Shrimp Paella with Quinoa and Edamame

SKILL LEVEL: BEGINNER
SERVES: 4
PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 30 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- ½ tsp fennel seeds
- ¼ tsp each salt and ground black pepper
- Pinch saffron threads (crush between fingers just before use)
- 1 can no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- · 450g peeled, deveined large shrimp
- 1½ cups quinoa
- 1 cup shelled edamame

DIRECTIONS

1) Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. When it's shimmering, add garlic and onion and cook until soft and translucent, about 3 minutes.
2) Add thyme, fennel seed, salt, pepper, and saffron; stir to combine. Add tomatoes and broth.
3) Raise heat to high and bring mixture to a boil. Then reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer 2 minutes.
4) Raise heat to medium and add shrimp; cook for 5 minutes.
5) Add quinoa and edamame and raise heat till mixture comes to a boil, then reduce to low and simmer, covered, till shrimp and quinoa are cooked through (20 to 25 minutes).

NUTRITION (PER SERVING)

Calories: 445, Protein: 30g, Carbs: 56g, Fat: 10g

Food styling by Hadas Smirnoff; Prop styling by Maeve Sheridan; Saffron: Givaga/Getty

Enamelled cast-iron paella pan in Cherry and optional glass lid by Le Creuset, *lecreuset.com*

3 Tips for Cooking a Great Paella

From expert Sarah Jay, who runs one of the best, most authentic online sources for all things paella, *paellapans.com:*

1) Use a real paella pan.

To develop maximum flavour, paella needs to cook in a thin layer – that's why paella pans from Spain are wide and shallow but not too deep. As an alternative, use the largest sauté pan you have.

2) Don't stir it once the liquid is boiling.

As paella cooks, the grains should form a loose connection. If you stir it then, it disrupts this network, changing the texture of the grain – and the final dish. So if the grain's in and the liquid's bubbling, hands off!

3) Eat the paella straight out of the pan.

Traditionally, the whole paella pan is brought to the table, where everyone claims a spot in front of it and digs right in. Try it, and you'll find the eating more fun, communal, and delicious.

ASK THE WINE HACKER

JEFFREY SCHILLER, AUTHOR OF *WINE HACK: WINE EDUCATION THAT STARTS WITH YOUR MOUTH, NOT WITH YOUR HEAD* @GONEDRINKIN

I've heard you can make cheap red wine taste more expensive by whipping it in a blender. Is that really a thing?

MARK MADISON, CAPE TOWN

Putting wine in a blender – let's call it "aggressive decanting" – is an old winemaker's trick to simulate how the wine would taste after ageing. It can make a cheap wine taste better, but only to a degree.

How does decanting work? First, most of what you experience in wine is its aromas. When the compounds that create these aromas hit oxygen, they fully release for your nose to detect.

Oxygen also mellows tannins, molecules from the oak your wine is aged in, which make wine bitter.

Of course, if you're patient, a more practical alternative to using a blender is to empty the bottle into any container – decanter, pitcher, bucket – that will maximise air contact with the surface, splash it around, then let it sit for half an hour. (Don't want to serve from a bucket? Funnel it back into the bottle.)

Decanting is really for rare wines that have been cooped up in a bottle five-plus years and need to be woken up. So, your R60 bottle of cab? It won't turn into a 90-pointer, but it will be more appealing.

Q&A

The model cook

Ex-pro swimmer, runway strutter, and underwear aficionado **Franco Noriega** is building an organic-chicken empire by Nils Bernstein

With Peruvian chef Franco Noriega's shredded physique – he's modelled for Dolce & Gabbana – and scantily clad YouTube cooking demos, you'd think his boy toy rep might overshadow his kitchen cred. But at Baby Brasa, his US-based Manhattan pollería, the food takes centre stage. A tribute to taste, nutrition, and affordability, Baby Brasa offers organic rotisserie chicken, creative salads, and sides that all redefine fast food for the fitness minded. We asked Noriega how he stays in model shape.

How can you love food but stay so fit?

I don't understand that I don't understand that "Don't trust a skinny chef" stereotype. I don't want to eat what a really unhealthy guy eats; at the same time, I can't call a salad "dinner" and be happy. For a real meal, I want a beautiful protein and super clean sides: yucca, sweet potatoes, quinoa, lentils. With the restaurant, it's all my favourite things in one place.

Baby Brasa's chicken is all-organic. Why?

I ate organic in Peru, where everything is organic and local. When I came to the US, I started gaining weight, feeling tired, getting sick. I mean, we are what we eat. I want food to taste good, but I also want to feel good. At the restaurant, we pay three times more for organic chicken than regular. At first – I really wanted to make a profit! – I cooked an organic chicken and a steroid chicken at the same time, and it was like two different proteins. The difference was so f#cking clear. If you roast organic chicken with only a little salt, it's delicious. But if you do that with a regular supermarket chicken, it's horrible.

What's your favourite ingredient or side?

Quinoa is an unbelievable superfood. I've been eating it since I was a year old. And it's so versatile! Make a smaller piece of chicken with a mound of quinoa and you're good to go. Throw it with chopped tomatoes and it's quinoa salad. You can substitute hot quinoa for rice, or do dessert – quinoa pudding's delicious.

What do you eat for breakfast?

First I have green tea with two tablespoons of apple cider vinegar, and wait 30 minutes. Then I usually do a shake with almond milk or açaí; and I have tons of things on the counter – maca root, goji berries, bee pollen, almond butter – so I add whatever's there, with maybe banana or avocado.

Any tips for guys who think "eating healthy" is boring?

I enjoy every single bite I take. Having to eat something bland or boring just to get there body-wise – for me it's not worth it. You can still have great food and look f#cking great.

How do you work out?

I ride my bike or skateboard across the bridge into Manhattan two or three times a day, so my cardio's covered. And I go to the gym five times a week. I love it, but I'm learning how important rest days are, whether you want to get bigger or slim down.

Decanting red wine makes it taste even more appealing

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH...

Aquafaba?

"Aquafaba", a name made up to conjure something more fabulous than "chickpea juice", is simply cooking water or canned liquid from chickpeas or other legumes (like beans, peas, or lentils) that's been beaten into a stiff froth for use as a vegan substitute for eggs or egg whites. Because its emulsifying properties are similar to that of eggs, it can be used raw or cooked, in sweet or savoury foods from waffles to mousse – it even makes a decent-tasting vegan mayo. Just don't try scrambling the stuff – it's best in dishes where eggs are just one of the ingredients, not the leading lady. To make aquafaba, drain the liquid from canned or cooked chickpeas or white beans (they have the most neutral flavour), and whip it. When it's the consistency of egg whites, it's done; if it's too watery, boil it down a little. Three tablespoons (about 10 calories) replaces one egg.

From top: Sandra Arenas; Sam Kaplan

THE FLAB BLASTER

FAT-LOSS TIPS FROM THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS TRAINER

BY GUNNAR PETERSON (@GUNNAR)

What's the minimum amount of exercise I can do and still see results?

JACK D, JOHANNESBURG

What year did you graduate from the University of Underachievement? Seriously, "the minimum" – that's what you want to know? As my friend Zach Even-Esh, from the Underground Strength Gym, says, the way you do anything is the way you do everything. Think about that: If you look for the minimum you have to do, you'll get the minimum out of it. And that's across the board – you'll always leave something on the table and never reach your full potential. So, fine: If you follow the US Department of Health and Human Services' recommendation to get at least 150 minutes of moderate (or 75 minutes of vigorous) aerobic activity a week, and pair that with a decent diet and adequate sleep, you won't become morbidly obese. Or you can aim for 45 to 90 minutes a day, five to six days a week, with workouts that combine multi-joint strength moves and high-intensity intervals (plus some steady-state cardio before or after), and eat clean food, drink lots of water, and shoot for eight hours of sleep a night, and see what those results look like. Your life, your choice!

Salad bar smackdown

After all the holiday meals, braais, social parties, and comfort-food binges, most of us are ready to race back to the salvation of the salad bar. The huge choice of ingredients can be daunting, though, so we compared the most popular salad fixings to see which have the fewest calories, the most nutrients, and the best chance of keeping you full all day.

Winter hibernation is over—you need a big bowl of something fresh and healthy.

Our "bar" fight winners

In our head-to-head salad contest, the ingredients highlighted in green came out on top:

Spinach OR **Mixed mesclun**

Spinach is packed with vitamins – not the case with mesclun, a combo of less nutritious greens.

Chicken OR **Steak**

Three times leaner, with half the calories and more protein, chicken easily beats steak.

Kidney beans OR **Black beans**

All beans are similar in nutrients, but we give black beans the edge for slightly higher protein and fibre.

Tofu OR **Egg**

While tofu wins "calories by weight", near-perfect eggs have more protein and vitamins.

Salmon OR **Tuna**

Tuna is a bit leaner and has more protein, but salmon has near triple the heart-smart omega-3s.

Cheddar OR **Feta**

Feta has about half the calories of cheddar and is almost 30% lower in fat.

Cauliflower OR **Broccoli**

These veggies are similar in calories, but broccoli has more calcium, iron, and vitamins C and K.

Almonds OR **Walnuts**

You can't go wrong with nuts, but almonds have better macros for fat, protein, and vitamin E.

Bacon OR **Ham**

An easy choice: Bacon has almost five times the fat of ham and more than three times the calories!

Tomatoes OR **Carrots**

Tomatoes ace out carrots for their slightly better carbs and calories (and, IOHO, taste).

Beets OR **Red cabbage**

These two are much the same in nutrients, but we pick red cabbage for more vitamin A, B_6, C, and K.

Dried cranberries OR **Raisins**

Though similar in macros, raisins have less sugar—dried cranberries often have added sugar!

PORTION OF THE MONTH

¼ CUP ALMONDS = 1 GOLF BALL

Order a diet-friendly salad—by choosing from our list of champs.

You've been Chop't!

If you're heading to one of the trendy salad shops and want a low-calorie option that's good for you, try these hacks:

Chop't
Mexicali Vegan (360 cal): Ask them to hold the romaine, add more spinach, and swap in walnuts for chips.

Sweetgreen
Spicy Sabzi (440 cal): Ask for red cabbage instead of beets and tomatoes in place of carrots.

Just Salad
Mediterranean Mix (570 cal): Switch out the romaine for spinach and the pita chips for pumpkin seeds.

From top: Jens Mortensen/Gallery Stock; TVK888/Getty; Juliachka/Getty

Close the door on clutter

ONE EXTREMELY MESSY MAN EMBRACES THE GREAT UNKNOWN: AN ULTRA-CLEAN, HYPER ORGANISED, AND "JOYOUS" APARTMENT

The less junky your junk-filled closet is, the happier you'll be, says the wildly popular KonMari Method.

As an unmarried man who works really hard, travels a ton, and leads an active social life, I've come to accept several less-than-awesome realities about my daily existence. (For starters: I eat way too much take-out, I'm constantly forgetting my toothbrush on trips, and these days, I could probably consume a few less sugary cocktails.) But if there's one piece of man-on-the-go collateral damage I simply can't accept, it's the increasingly gnarly state of my apartment. In recent months, I've found myself engaged in a daily battle against the black hole of my storage closet, the mountain of mismatched clothes scattered across various pieces of furniture, and the towering pile of envelopes on my desk. When it took me a full hour to locate my hiking boots (in a kitchen cupboard?) I realised: Holy shit, I'm messy — and I need an intervention. So, I reached out to Patty Morrissey, a Jedi-level practitioner of the ultra-hot KonMari Method of streamlining your life — inspired by the ultra-popular book The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering, by Marie Kondo — for her to whip me into shape. Here's what I learned.

By Jeff Wilser

1) Keep only what brings you joy

"Let's start with your clothes", says Patty. She instructs me to put every article of clothing — winter coats, underwear, bathing suits, the works — into a pile on my living room floor. Good God. She calls this the "power of the pile", since it forces you to confront how much you truly own. The Kondo principle is dead simple: Touch every single item. Feel it. Think about it. Ask yourself, does it bring me joy? If it does, keep it. If not, ditch it. Patty hands me an old fleece sweatshirt. "What do you think about this?" she asks in a neutral voice. I haven't worn it in years, and it doesn't bring me joy. Gone.

2) Saying thank-you to garbage is weird but fun

Before I toss the sweatshirt, Patty asks me to thank it for its many years of service. This is a pillar of the Kondo method, as it helps you get closure on the items you discard. "Thank you for keeping me warm when I jogged to the gym, sweatshirt", I actually say out loud. This is goofy but strangely empowering. In total, I stuffed 11 bags with clothes, which I donated to charity.

3) Decluttering will nudge you to upgrade

I have a knife rack in my kitchen. It's the kind that hangs on the wall. To be honest, it looks kind of cool, but the knives are dull, and I never use them. I hold a knife in my hand. Does it bring me joy? In its current condition... no. But what if I get it sharpened? I did just that. Now the knives get me excited to cook, and more cooking (and less Chinese take-out) means healthier eating. Tiny upgrades can have domino effects.

4) Your stuff gives clues to your values

Soon I get to my hiking boots: Joy. Backpack: Joy. Passport: Joy, joy, joy. At a gut level, I realise how much adventure travel means to me. I'm now headed to a trek in the mountains of Thailand — not a coincidence. Changes like this are why Kondo claims in her book that "many of my clients remark that they have lost weight or firmed up their tummies. It's a very strange phenomenon, but when we reduce what we own and essentially 'detox' our house, it has a detox effect on our bodies as well".

5) Never ball your socks

Kondo views balled-up socks as the devil's work, since they are "always in a state of tension, their fabric stretched and their elastic pulled... what treatment could be worse than this?" Patty instructs me to fold everything. On a philosophical level, the point is to treat your possessions with respect, which extends their lives and provides greater pleasure. On a more basic level, now my socks don't slide to my ankles. Win.

6) Sorting your stuff helps sort your past

I hold a coffee mug from an ex-girlfriend. Joy? I've been lugging that sucker around for years, never using it but never quite having the guts to throw it out. "Thank you for reminding me of the good times we had, coffee mug", I say, gently placing it in the trash. Kondo frowns upon clinging to the items that bring us pain. The focus is now on the present, not the past.

7) This is not an overnight process

"You wouldn't hire a personal trainer to give you a hot body in four hours", Patty tells me. It's a journey. Kondo suggests that the entire process can take six months, but I've found that even before you finish your entire home — I'm still working — you can feel immediate results. Bite-size chunks have value.

8) You will like your stuff more when you have less of it

One category is especially tough for me: books. I blanched at the idea of losing a single paperback, but I dutifully went through each and every novel and was embarrassed to find stacks that I had never read. "If you missed your chance to read a particular book... this is your chance to let it go", Kondo explains. "Get rid of all those unread books." So I did. And then something unexpected happened: Now I love my bookshelves. They seem to sparkle. The only books that remain are the ones I really like, so every time I glance in its direction, the bookshelves jolt me with a pick-me-up. Now extrapolate this sensation with everything you own, and the results can be, well, magical. ■

Jeff Wilser is the author of *Alexander Hamilton's Guide to Life*. Twitter: @JeffWilser

Before I toss the old sweatshirt, Patty tells me to thank it for its years of service. Closure is crucial, preach KonMari practitioners.

The Seven Rules of ROOM SERVICE

On your next getaway, navigate in-room dining like a true pro (and never drop R120 on a bland club sandwich again)

Anders Overgaard/Trunk Archive

NOTHING SAYS "I'M ON VACATION" LIKE chilling in your best borrowed terrycloth robe, waiting for someone to deliver a tray of fresh-cooked, delicious food right to your room. But I know what you're thinking: Room service? It's the hotel bogeyman! The food sucks, and it's way overpriced. And the minibar? Don't even think about it, unless you want to spend R60 on a domestic beer. Well, you can listen to the haters about in-room dining (IRD), or you can start getting smart about it. With that in mind, I called some hotshot hospitality insiders to get their secrets for hacking the system and scoring a killer meal every single time. And I compiled their advice into the definitive Seven Rules of Room Service.

by Mark Ellwood

1) Pick up the phone!

It's an automated world these days, and fancy hotels are increasingly equipped with bedside tablets loaded with apps for ordering room service. But go old-school, brother. "The person on the phone will tell you honestly the best dishes to order, because they know it will affect the tip for the waiter", says Lisa Brefere, a former hotel chef who now runs her own consulting firm, GigaChef.

Now, I know this defeats the purpose of "room service", but if you slid on some slippers and padded down to the hotel's main restaurant to order directly, that would be even better. A dirty secret: Head Chefs usually cook for the big seated restaurant, and humble trainees handle the in-room dining. So, if you want your food prepped right, order at the restaurant and ask them to bring it up to your room. They will.

2) Say no to room-service coffee

For starters, it's a rip-off. Veteran hotel GM Anthony Arbeeny calls it the "all-time No. 1 profit generator" because of the insane mark-up. To make matters worse, it's shitty coffee, filled from the kitchen's giant urns that have been brewing longer than the Middle East peace accords. The same goes for the "fancy" French press. More often than not, say my experts, the kitchen simply adds a few grounds to the press, then tops it with coffee from aforementioned urn. But since we all need that morning jolt, I recommend travelling with an Aeropress (R689) and a small bag of grounds; it makes a great brew with just a little hot water.

3) While we're talking about breakfast: Order your eggs like a damn lumberjack

Here's a fun fact from chef Lisa Brefere: Only 1% or less of orders are placed for lunch, 30% for dinner — but the majority arrive at breakfast time. So, at 7am, kitchens are overloaded. Eggs are left idling and congealing before they're delivered (even ickier, they're likely made from defrosted liquid eggs rather than fresh-cracked and free-range). So the best way to guarantee quality and rapid delivery is to ask for your eggs sunnyside up. It forces the chef to use actual eggs, and the servers to deliver them quickly before they visibly congeal.

4) For dinner, go Big Paleo. Trust me.

Hotels make the slimmest profit on the highest-priced items on the menu. That means, believe it or not, all of the high-protein treats are the best value at your typical hotel. I'm talking veal, lamb, and especially filet mignon. But when you're ordering a steak to your room, ask for it one shade rarer than you'd usually eat, because while it's en route in the hotel's warming trolley, it will continue to cook. If you're hungry en route to your lodging late at night, be sure to pre-order and ask for that grilled steak to be ready and waiting when you arrive. Otherwise, the kitchen will be closed and you'll be stuck with a cold club.

FOR THE ULTIMATE DO'S AND DONT'S OF ROOM-SERVICE DINING, VISIT **MENSFITNESS.CO.ZA/TRAVEL.**

5) Don't order when it's raining

Lisa Brefere says hotels can "really get screwed" by a deluge of orders during a downpour and will often commandeer staffers from other departments to man the kitchen. Translation: Your dinner might well be prepped by someone with no better culinary kudos than you have.

6) Don't tip twice, dumbass

Hidden fees are virtually everywhere in hotels. When you order, ask the operator if there's a delivery charge — it's usually a couple of bucks — and whether it's levied per order or per person. And, by god, don't be fooled by the extra gratuity line either. Mark my words: Ninety-nine percent of in-room dining orders will already include a generous gratuity. Usually around 21–22%.

7) Buy your minibar at check-in

Minibars are increasingly falling out of fashion. There are multiple reasons: Charges are easily disputed at check-out, and customers are getting savvy about their astronomical mark-ups. But why deprive yourself of that late-night can of ice-cold beer, especially on vacation? Some hotels, allow you to buy the whole thing at a markdown beforehand. So do yourself a favour: Treat yourself. ■

Mark Ellwood is the author of Bargain Fever: How to Shop in a Discounted World.

The Perfect Fit

The Winter WARRIOR

Summer has come and gone and it is safe to say that winter is on it's way and, if you're a man who prides himself on always making sure to look his best despite the dreaded cold, no sweat, we have got you covered, literally! Check out these winter staples we think every man should have in his winter wardrobe.

By **Charelle Johnson**
Photography by **Kirsten Ho Photography**
Grooming by **Alexa Charilou**

The Easy Denim Shirt

If you're headed to a social event and don't want to have to beat the cold off with a stick, a denim shirt should be your number one go-to!

The Fitted Tee

In our sunny climate not every day will require numerous layers to stay warm and t-shirts will always serve you well.

The Manly Pashmina

Scarves are an easy way to rev-up any outfit, without putting in the work. Opt for textures, prints and size, the bigger and bolder, the better! Throw over a plain shirt, and make it the focus of your look.

The Old-School Cord

Corduroy jackets have come a long way from their association with the less stylish, and have since become a go-to winter warmer for all. Add texture and edge to your evening look with a tailored, panelled and button embellished jacket.

The Military Jacket

When Mother Nature gets the best of us, its probably better not to test her ability to reign supreme. Cover up, stay warm and be the best dressed man in every room with military inspired collared jackets with press studs.

The Richly Coloured Jacket

Colour is king! Fight the urge to wear dull pigments and brighten your days with richer tones like maroon, mustard and olive. They're fitting for the season and will make the dreary days go by faster.

The Textured Jersey

On hurried days, when time is not on your side, a quick throw on layer will serve you best. This winter we're all about maintaining the necessity of simple classics, with a little something extra.

Leading biohackers, US Special Forces, NASA, and the most accomplished exercise physiologist on the planet all agree on one thing: That a strict low-carb, high-fat "ketogenic diet" won't just help you lose weight, exercise more efficiently, feel better, and generally improve your life (and even your chances of getting to Mars!) – it may also fight cancer and wipe out diabetes forever. The only wrinkle? It's not for the faint of heart.

BY TYLER GRAHAM
PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEVI BROWN

HOW THE KETO DIET CHANGES EVERYTHING

Timothy Noakes, MD, is an emeritus professor in the Division of Exercise Science and Sports Medicine at the University of Cape Town. He's one of the most accomplished exercise physiologists on the planet. You can't walk by a restaurant in Cape Town that doesn't offer a "Noakes option" — say, an avocado stuffed with breakfast sausage and eggs, or a double cheeseburger with lettuce sans bun — and evidence of his teachings seems to be everywhere, mostly in the form of our nation's best-known athletes, including ageless golfing legend Gary Player and eight-time Ironman World Champion Paula Newby-Fraser. In fact, Noakes is a celebrity these days, he's even been pulled into South African presidential politics: To echo the country's papers of record, "Is President Jacob Zuma's and his wife's dramatic weight loss a result of the Noakes Diet?" No one is sure about the president, but his wife, definitely: She's lost 30 kilograms following the Noakes plan.

To high-performing athletes, Noakes preaches that the bedrock tenet of endurance athletic nutrition — that winning performance is best fueled by eating lots of carbohydrates — is simply wrong. Instead, he believes athletes can alter their bodies so that their metabolism burns fat as a primary fuel source, a physiological process known as ketosis, either from stored body fat or from the foods they eat every day.

For non-athletes and anyone trying to lose weight or keep it off, Noakes' advice is that eating a high-fat diet, with few if any refined carbs and as little sugar as possible, will switch on the same fat-burning system and keep your body lean and your weight stable without making you hungry. According to Noakes and a growing number of nutritionists, physiologists, and biohackers, when you're in a state of ketosis — best attained through a strict "ketogenic diet" — good things happen.

Sometimes, amazingly good things.

Two years ago, NBA's LeBron James famously lost 11 kilograms and upped his late-game endurance by cutting carbs and sugars from his diet. Tim Ferriss, the author of the Four-Hour self-improvement book series, followed a strict keto diet to cure his Lyme disease, and performs a long multi-day fast every four months as a means, he says, of pushing ketosis further and starving incipient pre-cancerous cells of sugar (more on that later). Not too long ago, Sami Inkinen, the ultra-fit co-founder of American real estate juggernaut Trulia, rowed with his wife from California to Hawaii in record time on a keto diet, to promote high-fat eating and raise awareness about the dangers of too much sugar. The Keto

Good news: Bacon is keto-friendly. (Bad news: You shouldn't eat a lot of it.)

The *Eat This, Not That!* Guide to the Ketogenic Diet

No carbs, no sugars, no fruits. And all proteins aren't created equal. Confused? Read on.

BY ADAM BIBLE

The ketogenic diet can be dizzyingly complicated. You want to load up on fats and protein and keep your carb intake low– but all fats and proteins aren't alike, and there are some veggies higher in carbohydrates than others. Oh, and fruit (fruit!) is pretty much banned. But don't worry: We've put together the best and worst of each category so you can go Keto with confidence.

CATEGORY

FATS

EAT THIS! Saturated fats including coconut oil, ghee, grass-fed butter, duck fat, tallow, and lard, all essential for a healthy immune system, dense bones, and proper testosterone levels; **monounsaturated fats** like olive, avocado, macadamia, and almond oils, which boost heart health and provide vitamin E, important for vision and a strong immune system; **polyunsaturated omega-3s,** such as wild-caught salmon, sardines, and sustainably harvested seafood, to prevent heart disease and stroke and reduce blood pressure; and **medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs),** fatty acids that are easily absorbed and used for energy. Linked to weight loss, MCTs increase satiety and rev up metabolism. Some are found in coconut oil, but you can buy a concentrated form of MCT oil.

NOT THAT! Refined fats and oils like sunflower, canola, soybean, grapeseed, and corn oils, which have been processed at high temperatures, creating free radicals that can damage cells; and **trans fats,** such as margarine and other spreads, which contribute to weight gain, increase stroke risk.

CATEGORY

PROTEINS

EAT THIS! Meat and offal (e.g, tongue, liver, heart) from grass-fed or pasture-raised animals – it's low in calories and contains vitamins like A and E along with tons of antioxidants; **wild-caught and sustainably harvested seafood,** which is higher in omega-3 fatty acids and

Diet, say its ardent supporters, is a natural way to literally reprogram your metabolism and transition to an upgraded operating system. You'll ultimately feel better and perform better, and your body fat will plummet.

But this sort of "low-carbohydrate, high-fat" (LCHF) diet, as Noakes calls it, is still far from mainstream. It takes serious dedication to drop your daily total carb intake to below 50 grams (or 20 to 30g of net carbs, which are sans fibre), the equivalent of a single cup of brown rice. The United States Department of Agriculture Dietary Guidelines were changed to mention the need to limit intake of added sugars and refined carbs like bread, rice, pasta, cookies, and crackers, which spike blood sugar more rapidly than candy. Check the label of nearly any sports drink, and it's most likely loaded with natural or added sugar. Go to the grocery store today and the labels are awash with the message of "low fat", "no fat", or "zero fat".

Meanwhile, Noakes continues preaching that the right kinds of fats — the ones our bodies evolved to process, like animal fat and butter, olive and coconut oil (but not vegetable oils like corn oil and soybean oil) — are extremely healthy. Noakes titled his 2012 autobiography Challenging Beliefs, and, at age 67, he's publicly waging a war against carbs and sugar from his Twitter account, @ProfTimNoakes, where he chimes in every few hours and has churned out more than 27 000 tweets since 2012.

Noakes constantly retweets the latest nutrition stories and offers his own food for thought: "Consumption of refined grains, sweets and desserts, sugared drinks, and deep-fried foods = more heart disease" or "Truth wins in the end. But it takes time".

Carb killer. *When South African exercise physiologist Tim Noakes went keto, he dropped from 101 to 81kg - his high school weight.*

The healthy ultramarathoner who Sex with a Porn Star or a Run Through Bavaria: You Decide

Noakes' war on sugar goes back a generation, to when his father developed type-2 diabetes. Type-2 is a disease in which the body gradually loses its ability to regulate blood sugar through the production of the hormone insulin. It's linked to genetics, but also to diet — particularly sugar and refined carbs — as well as obesity and inactivity. Diabetes experts estimate that the disease speeds up the ageing process by roughly a third, damaging the body from the inside out. Too much blood sugar slowly destroys blood vessels, with results ranging from mild — early wrinkling of skin — to catastrophic: Heart disease, blindness, stroke, amputations due to poor circulation, and even Alzheimer's disease (more on that later).

Noakes' father eventually died from type-2, but because Noakes himself followed a low-fat diet, exercised regularly (he's run upward of 70 marathons, as well as a handful of ultras), and didn't smoke, he figured he'd be spared.

better for the environment than farmed fish; and **free-range, organic eggs,** which contain higher levels of vitamin A and E, beta-Carotene, and omega-3 fatty acids than the farmed variety.

NOT THAT! **Factory-farmed animal products and seafoods,** which are lower in nutrients and often worse for the environment than their healthier counterparts; and **processed sausages and hotdogs,** which, more often than not, have preservatives called nitrates that have been linked to cancer.

CATEGORY

VEGETABLES

EAT THIS! **Dark leafy greens,** like Swiss chard, spinach, kale, and lettuce; **lower-carb veggies,** like cucumber, celery, asparagus, squash, and zucchini; cruciferous veggies, like cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, and brussels sprouts; nightshades, like eggplant, tomatoes, and peppers; root vegetables, like onion, garlic, and radishes, and sea veggies, like nori and kombu. The guidelines are simple: Focus on dark, leafy greens, then the stuff that grows above the ground, then root vegetables.

NOT THAT! **Starchy, high-carb vegetables,** like potatoes, peas, corn, yucca, parsnips, beans, yams, and legumes are great, nutritious whole foods that work well in the regular diet of a guy looking to get healthy and fit – however, their elevated carbs make them a no-go for achieving ketosis.

CATEGORY

DAIRY

EAT THIS! **Full-fat dairy products,** such as yoghurt, cottage cheese, cream, sour cream, goat cheese, and other cheeses. Note: Dairy should be eaten sparingly, but when you do eat it, stick with full-fat, as it's more filling and nutritious.

NOT THAT! **Milk** – but not cheese – is off the list because it contains a lot of lactose, a form of sugar, which makes it high in carbohydrates. When cheese is made, all the sugar is eaten by bacteria and turned into lactic acid, cutting the carb content way down. **Low- and reduced-fat dairy products** are to be avoided as they're overly processed, which strips out nutrients like the fatty acids that make you feel full. Plus, sugar is often added to make up for a loss of flavour and texture, so some actually have more sugar than full-fat dairy. Resist shredded cheese, too, as it contains a carby potato starch that keeps it from sticking together.

CATEGORY

NUTS AND SEEDS

EAT THIS! Macadamia nuts, pecans, walnuts, almonds, flax seeds, and sunflower seeds. Be careful when eating nuts, as they're calorie-dense and can easily put you over your carb limit for the day.

NOT THAT! Cashews, pistachios, and chestnuts are on the higher end for carbs in nuts, and should be avoided.

CATEGORY

FRUITS

EAT THIS! **Avocados** are low in carbs and have great fat and fibre content; **berries** are okay since their carb content is negligible; and 1 cup of **tomatoes** has just 6g of carbs.

NOT THAT! **Fruits** in general, dried or otherwise, are forbidden since most have high sugar and carb content.

CATEGORY

DRINKS

DRINK THIS! **Water, sparkling water, black coffee, unsweetened and herbal teas, unsweetened nut milks, wine, light beer, and liquor.** Caffeine is fine for most people – just don't go pouring in sugar or milk; the same goes for tea and nut milk. Lower-carb alcohol in moderation is okay, especially if you're at the point where you're just trying to maintain weight.

NOT THAT! **Soft drinks, fruit juices, sweet wines, craft beers, and flavoured liquor** are filled with way too much sugar and/or carbs to be allowed if you're serious about keto. Some people will drink diet, or "zero", soft drinks, but avoid them if you can because the citric acid and aspar-tame often found in them may derail your trip to ketosis.

CATEGORY

SWEETS

EAT THIS! Sweeteners like **stevia, erythritol, and xylitol** can be made a part of your keto diet, but try to buy only the pure versions, as the powdered products usually have a small amount of sugar added as a bulking agent; **inulin** is a sweet and starchy plant fibre that helps regulate blood sugar; **monk fruit powder** is 300 times sweeter than sugar and doesn't have a bitter aftertaste like stevia; and at least **70% cocoa dark chocolate** and **cocoa powder** as they're packed with antioxidants.

NOT THAT! **Sugar, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, and agave nectar** need to be ditched. Even if honey and agave are healthy whole foods, sugar is still sugar and will bump you out of ketosis.

To be sure, as he got older he put on some weight, and his energy sagged, but he was in good shape.

Regardless, in 2010, Noakes was diagnosed with type-2 diabetes. Though he didn't know it yet, a lifetime of well-intentioned carbo-loading for his athletic endeavours had set him up for a fall.

Not long after he got the news, he happened to receive an e-mail about a book title *The New Atkins for a New You*, and realised he recognised many of the authors' names on the cover, which belonged to respected exercise experts Stephen Phinney, MD, PhD; Jeff Volek, PhD, RD; and Eric Westman, MD. They argued that the late Dr Robert Atkins, who famously promoted a low-carb, high-fat diet in the 1980s — and was routinely lampooned for promoting eggs, bacon, and cheese as healthy foods that worked great for weight loss — had been right all along. The professors backed up their position with more than 50 new dietary studies and an action plan for getting lean and maintaining weight loss. Noakes says he learned more about nutrition that year than in his previous 42 years as a doctor. "I was 101 kilograms when I picked up that book", he tells me. "Today, I'm 81. I've achieved my high school weight and my old running times."

His new way of eating, he says, also cured his migraines and acid reflux. On top of that, it eliminated spikes in blood sugar, kept his appetite in check, and allowed his body to burn its own fat

as fuel. After Noakes' diabetes had reversed course, he wrote about it for *Discovery Health News*; that triggered a national debate across South Africa, which is plagued by an epidemic of diabetes and its associated conditions.

Last year, Noakes published his fourth book, *The Real Meal Revolution*, which explains why high-fat diets work and how to incorporate them into everyday life. "It's gone viral", he says.

The Road to 7% Body Fat

What it feels like to go Keto

Putting your body into ketosis – causing it to switch from burning carbs to burning fat for fuel – is a major metabolic change. Some people don't react well, while others thrive on it and feel more energy. "Low-carb and ketogenic diets aren't for everyone, so it's important to listen to your body", says Alissa Rumsey, RD, CSCS, of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, USA. "If after a few weeks you still feel worse than you did before you started, you should stop and reconsider if it's the right diet for you." Here's what she says you should expect when going keto:

FIRST FEW DAYS

You may feel low on energy, lethargic, and dizzy. Some people suffer from headaches or flu-like symptoms during the first few days or weeks due to the depletion of muscle glycogen and the lack of glucose. This is the hard part, because you have to avoid eating carbohydrates to halt the cycle of glucose-based metabolism, even though your glycogen stores are dwindling and your cravings are probably increasing. Your body is used to burning glucose, not fat, for fuel, which is why – for the first few weeks, while your body adapts – your energy levels may be down.

FIRST WEEK

You'll likely see a pretty rapid weight loss in the first week, though this will be from water depletion. Glycogen is attached to water in our bodies, so when you lose glycogen, you also lose water – as much as two-plus kilograms of just fluid. Your workouts may also suffer during the first few weeks; many people report a loss of strength and endurance until their bodies become more efficient at using fats for fuel.

SECOND WEEK

Your body will still be adapting to using fat for fuel, but towards the end of the second week and into the third week, you may start to see increasing energy levels. As glycogen becomes depleted, your body will start producing ketones – some of which are excreted in the urine, so you can now start measuring the levels with keto test strips (available at *ketolife.co.za*) to see if you're at a low enough level of carbohydrate restriction.

3–4 WEEKS OUT

At this point, if you've been keeping your total carbs to less than 50g per day, you should be in ketosis. Getting down to 10% body fat, or even 7% – a truly shredded physique – is totally doable, depending on your starting percentage. Your energy levels should start to improve, though it can take several months for your body to fully adapt to using fat for fuel. The desire to eat regularly throughout the day to sustain mental clarity will have faded, and your muscles will have access to a near-limitless supply of energy.

Cancer cells thrive in high-sugar environments. On a Keto Diet, your body will be primed to fight back. Hard.

How to eat in a post "bonk" world

Though higher-fat diets go by many names — most recently, the well-known Paleo Diet, as well as the Zone and the South Beach Diet, both of which restrict sugary foods and refined carbs — the Ketogenic Diet has taken the zero-carb and high-fat stance to a whole new level. It's especially resonated in the biohacker community of Silicon Valley, USA.

From an evolutionary standpoint, ketones — molecules formed by the breakdown of stored fat — are a very important fuel. And ketosis, the process by which the body uses those fuels, is essential for survival.

Here's how it works: The body — even that of a very lean athlete — stores about 40 000 calories of fat compared with just 2000 calories of the carbohydrate glycogen. When those carbs have been depleted, the body taps its fat stores for energy. The same is true for athletes who "bonk" during exercise — it's because they've used up all their stored carbs. To go on, they must either eat more carbs (to burn as sugar) or start burning fat. When marathoners break through the so-called "wall" late in a race, they've begun to burn fat.

Thanks to Noakes and other Keto Diet supporters, a growing number of athletes today prefer to be in that state at all times. Once they make the switch, they say, not only are their race results and game-day performances better, they report sustained energy, better moods, and clearer thinking.

Switching from foods that cause chronic illness and make you fat to foods that keep you permanently lean and energetic without getting hungry would seem like a no-brainer. But it's difficult, and most of us don't really know what ketosis is like. The average South African today is what nutritionists call "a sugar burner". We ingest carbs for breakfast, so our blood sugar goes up quickly then comes crashing down before lunch, when we get our next carb fix. The process happens over and over again without our bodies entering ketosis.

But getting your body to enter full ketosis is no small feat. Imagine forgoing all starchy vegetables, breads, sugary drinks (including fruit juice), pasta — essentially everything that isn't meat or a non-starchy vegetable. It's a tall order that only gets taller, because, once you've started the process, the body, feeling deprived, undergoes a transition phase often termed the "low-carb flu". For a few weeks, physical and mental performance — at work, in the gym — dips noticeably and uncomfortably as the body tries to tap its missing fuel source. Not everyone sticks it out. (For more on what it's like to go Keto, see "The Road to 7% Body Fat", opposite page.)

There's a shortcut to ketosis, however: Fasting. If you don't eat for many hours, your body will naturally go into fat-burning mode. There are many different fasting protocols to get into ketosis, but the most common is called intermittent fasting, which consists of not eating for 12 to 16 hours.

For instance, one can eat dinner at 8pm, skip breakfast the next morning, and eat lunch at noon. Or, like Matt Mattson, PhD, chief of the Laboratory of Neurosciences at the National Institute on Aging, USA, you can push it even further: Mattson regularly skips

Zucch-guini. *A spiralizer turns zucchini into tasty "linguini".*

Four killer keto dishes

Ready to take the keto journey to a tight belly and rippling abs, but not so thrilled about having to stay away from your favourite carbo concoctions? Follow this handy guide from keto master chef Marie Emmerich, author of **Quick and Easy Ketogenic Cooking,** and fool your brain–and stomach–with these low-carb but satisfying replacement dishes.

1

If you're craving chicken parm:

■ Use a no-sugar marinara sauce and replace the carb-laden pasta noodles with thin-sliced chicken breast to cut way down on the carbs but still have a satisfying meal. And make sure you use grass-fed ground beef for the filling so you get more vitamins and omega-3s.

2

If you're craving pasta:

■ Spend a few bucks on a spiralizer – seriously, this thing is great for turning veggies into long noodlelike strands (check *amazon.com*). To get your pasta fix without the carbs, make spaghetti out of a couple of zucchinis, then dress it with parmesan cheese – which is high in protein – and medium-chain triglyceride (MCT) oil.

3

If you're craving mashed potatoes:

■ Chop up a cauliflower head and cook it with organic broth and turnips for a few hours. Then blend it with a handheld immersion blender or in a food processor until smooth. Add chives, salt, pepper, and butter for guilt-free, low-carb gorging. You won't be able to tell the difference.

4

If you're craving rice:

■ Hit up the versatile cauliflower again to make a delicious "rice" that has only 5g of carbs per cup compared with cooked white rice's 45g. To prepare, chop up the cauliflower head and put the pieces into a food processor; pulse until the bits are so tiny they resemble rice grains. Fry it all up with soy sauce and a dash of fish sauce for fried rice, or use it to make your own keto-friendly sushi rolls.

Prop styling by Sarah Guido/Halley Resources

breakfast and lunch altogether. With no blood sugar spikes and crashes, just steady fat burning, he, like most intermittent fasters, feels mentally sharp and experiences little if any sense of deprivation.

Keto: the official diet of Mars

But if all of this sounds like too much misery for you, consider another reason for going keto: Evidence shows that ketosis could not only help stave off Alzheimer's but also help cure cancer.

A few years ago, Dominic D'Agostino, a PhD and associate professor at the University of San Francisco, USA, was trying to solve a big problem for the Navy SEALs. Military divers, he learned, use a device called a rebreather, which is silent and allows for extra-long dives — but, for reasons that are not yet fully understood, makes divers prone to unpredictable, life-threatening oxygen toxicity seizures.

While looking for a way to treat these seizures, D'Agostino stumbled upon the Ketogenic Diet, which also happens to be a proven treatment for a possibly related malady; epileptic seizures in kids. "There are a lot of treatments for epilepsy", he says, "but the only one we, board-certified neurologists, can say cures the disease is the Ketogenic Diet".

Why? D'Agostino believes the diet remedies a metabolism imbalance in which brain cells are starved of, or unable to process, glucose, causing the brain to go haywire. Live brain cells are extremely difficult to study (for obvious reasons), but researchers have been able to tease out some clues from the petri dish about why keto diets are good for the brain. Aside from being an energy source, ketones are also important neural signalling molecules and gene transcription facilitators. Ketones also seem to modulate the stress response in neurones and make them more resilient to excitatory nerve transmissions — the kind that can cause seizures. D'Agostino also found that ketones can elevate levels of the calming neurotransmitter GABA.

Theories aside, when he treated SEALs with a keto diet, their seizures stopped.

But brain diseases aren't the only illnesses doctors are beginning to think are metabolic rather than purely genetic in origin. Many common types of cancer — oesophagal, pancreatic, colon, kidney, thyroid — are associated with obesity and diabetes, and D'Agostino believes he's on the path to understanding why.

Cancer cells thrive in high-sugar environments because they rely on glycogen (sugar burned for energy) to survive; type-2 diabetes, especially, provides potential cancer cells with a high-sugar environment. (Interestingly, PET scans detect cancer by finding areas in the body with excess glucose compared with normal tissues.) This suggests not only that glycogen may contribute to cancer, but also that it may be cancer's Achilles' heel: If cancer cells become compromised when their host is in a ketogenic state, the body's own immune responses may be able to effectively fight the disease.

"We think the majority of cancers could be metabolically managed through nutritional ketosis, either as a stand-alone pill or an adjunct to standard care", says D'Agostino, who has published research showing that ketogenic diets can double the lifespan of mice with metastatic cancers. For a more emphatic take: Leading Boston College, USA, cancer researcher Thomas Seyfried, MD, believes that a ketogenic diet is therapeutically even more valuable in fighting cancer than chemo.

Achieving a ketogenic state could get a lot easier in the coming years. D'Agostino believes a ketone supplement will be the breakthrough, making the job of drastically cutting carbs from the diet much easier. His latest creation is KetoCana, which floods the body with ketones and eliminates the symptoms of carbohydrate withdrawal. (For more about ketone supplements, turn to Page 124.)

Meanwhile, military researchers are focused on keto diets as well, believing soldiers could operate optimally on fewer, denser meals. Currently, America's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Department of Defense, and NASA, are all running ketogenic experiments. NASA believes the diet will be important for manned missions to Mars because it protects against higher levels of radiation in space by increasing the brain's resilience to stress. Plus, "the energy density of a ketogenic diet is higher, so you have to carry less weight", says D'Agostino.

But for evidence of the Keto Diet's more immediate effects, Noakes brings up South African athlete Bruce Fordyce, 61, who won the country's biggest ultramarathon, the 89-kilometre Comrades, a record nine times. He ate high-carb his whole life, eventually putting on weight and becoming insulin resistant. Recently, though, he switched to a high-fat diet — and has regained his former waistline and dramatically improved his marathon times. Little by little, according to Noakes, we're learning.

"This is the single most important health intervention we can make as doctors", he says. "And as a nation."

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MEN'S FITNESS

THE CALLIET WAY

BY MEN'S FITNESS SOUTH AFRICA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON ELLIS @JASONELLISPHOTO

Celebrity Trainer, Body Transformation Specialist, and TV Personality, Corey Calliet, has built an unparalleled rapport within the entertainment industry since arriving in Los Angeles in 2015. With over 15 years of experience in sculpting and transforming physiques, Corey formulates and implements techniques catered to the specific goals and needs of each of his clients – from A-list celebrities to top professional athletes.

Corey's cutting-edge training style, known as "The Calliet Way", pulls from athletic strength and conditioning techniques and professional bodybuilding fundamentals. His methodology focuses on shaping the desired aesthetic for his clients while deeply rooting them in a lifestyle favoring optimal health and functioning. His ability to transform both mind and body in this way makes him highly sought after by celebrities, professional athletes, and those requiring drastic changes to their physique.

Among his top accolades, he has sculpted Michael B. Jordan for his lead roles in the box office hits Creed (I & II), Black Panther, and Without Remorse; transformed contestants in 3 consecutive seasons of E!s Revenge Body by Khloe Kardashian; and is currently training star NFL wide-receiver of the Pittsburg Steelers Juju Smith-Schuster for a breakthrough 2020 season.

Corey's methodology has made a powerful impact on many notable celebrity clients such as; Lance Gross, John Boyega, Tyreke Evans, Queen Latifah, Khloe Kardashian, Terrence Jenkins, Tony Bellew, A$AP Rocky, Rocsi Diaz, Jasmine Sanders, James Frecheville, Robbie Jones, Sterling Brim, and Keith Powers. And stamped the motion picture world by way of Fox, MGM, Universal Pictures, Marvel, Paramount Pictures, and Walt Disney. As Corey's style is evident in the results you see in his clients, his own physique is equally important. Deemed as one of the 50 Most Fit men in the world on the Flex50 list by AskMen Magazine alongside Usain Bolt, Michael Phelps and Conor McGregor; Corey and his work have been covered in an array of media outlets and networks, including health, fitness and lifestyle magazines such as People Magazine, Men's Fitness, GQ, Men's Journal, Cosmopolitan, MAXIM, TRAIN magazine, Brit + Co, Health Magazine, and Athleisure.

In addition to training the stars and transforming the minds and bodies of people around the world, Corey is a motivational speaker, a passionate advocate for health and wellness, and most importantly, a devoted father to his daughter.

Everyone has their own special story about how they got involved in health and fitness, could you tell us a little bit about your journey to where you are today?

To the eye, I may seem like an overnight success coming straight into the industry working on box office hits with A-list celebrities, but this journey started long before I touched down in LA - it started with me. I wanted to change my life, so I started changing my body. I wouldn't be here today to tell my story if I didn't. Bodybuilding saved me from what statistics say I shouldn't have made it out of. Born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana, I have a hustle mentality matched only by a relentless drive, I applied this to bodybuilding and never looked back. I transformed myself in the gym, then I started transforming others. Word spread and I had people coming from all over looking to lock into my powerful training methodology - this soon turned into transforming celebrities filming projects locally in Louisiana. When I touched down in LA, I hit the ground running and haven't slowed down since. In the last 5 years, I've set out to do what others couldn't. I became the #1 celebrity trainer in the world, I've been behind the camera and in front of it - I haven't stopped pushing every limit in front of me.

How do you balance keeping fit while leading a busy life?

I focus on consistency and most importantly, I prioritize my goals - because if I'm operating at my best for myself, I'll be at my best for everyone else counting on me. I put my pursuits first by any means necessary, which usually involves me getting up and at it before any obligations can get me. My clients, business partners, and team, are a huge part of my day so if I can get my work in before they need me I'm already winning! Also, I'm no stranger to training at any point in the 24hrs we are each given; when I'm working on film projects, set life doesn't have set hours, so I get it in where I can fit it in.

What are the training principles you stick to? I'd consider myself old-school in terms of my training principles.

- I lock in on every movement of every rep, of every set, and focus on mind-muscle connection. I feel the working muscles and make sure I'm hitting every facet of the movement from the eccentric, to concentric, and isometric contractions to get the most out of every rep. I also visualize my specific goal for the muscle I'm targeting before each exercise and maximize my efforts to achieve what I'm after.
- Shock the muscle. Plateau and adaptation have no place in my training regimen. Even if the movements stay the same (like some of the bodybuilder staples), I constantly throw curveballs into each exercise whether it's dropsets, increasing time under tension or building static holds into each rep, maxing out on weight or going for burnout, I never allow my working muscle to become complacent.
- I outwork everyone - including myself. I always set out to push past my comfort zone - that's where change happens.

What is your typical training routine?

I train each of my focused muscle groups twice a week; concentrating most of my training session on a single group, and finishing with a touch-up of a previously trained group. In terms of my training sessions, I dedicate 2-3 exercises to each muscle within the main group I'm training, and reserve 2-3 exercises for the group I'm touching up. For example, on back day I'll hit 2-3 exercises each for upper, middle, and lower back then finish with some bicep and tricep exercises.

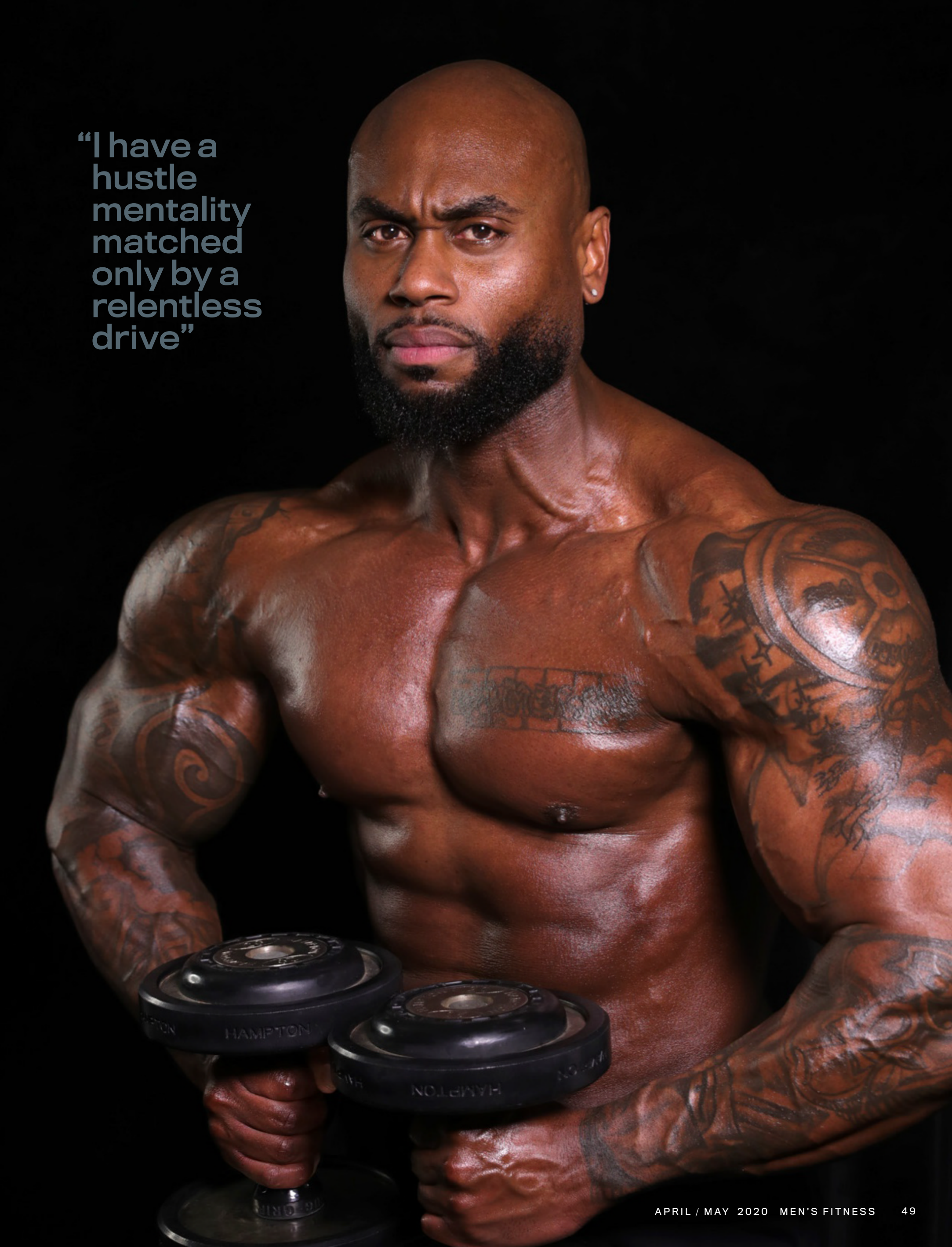
When it comes to nutrition, are there any fundamentals you don't deviate from?

I stay fueled and don't allow myself to go hungry. I rely on nutrition to not only keep my muscles full and functioning but to keep my energy ahead of the demands of my busy schedule. Eating every three hours or so keeps me going and helps my body's recovery process - especially on days where my resting hours are cut short.

How can you maintain muscle while dropping body fat?

Aside from getting your nutrition in line, increase the rep volume and intensity of your weight training sessions and add no more than 30-45 minutes of cardio per day (or every other day depending on your body's response). For your training, incorporate supersets or giant sets to increase your fat-burning potential, and limit your rest time between sets and exercises. When it comes to cardio, there are a few things you should do to optimize the fat-burn:

- **Implement interval-style cardio.**
- **Focus on muscle-activation during cardio** *(stairmill, HIIT, etc.)*
- **Perform cardio either fasted or post-training.**


“I have a hustle mentality matched only by a relentless drive”
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HAMPTON

“I focus on consistency and most importantly, I prioritize my goals”

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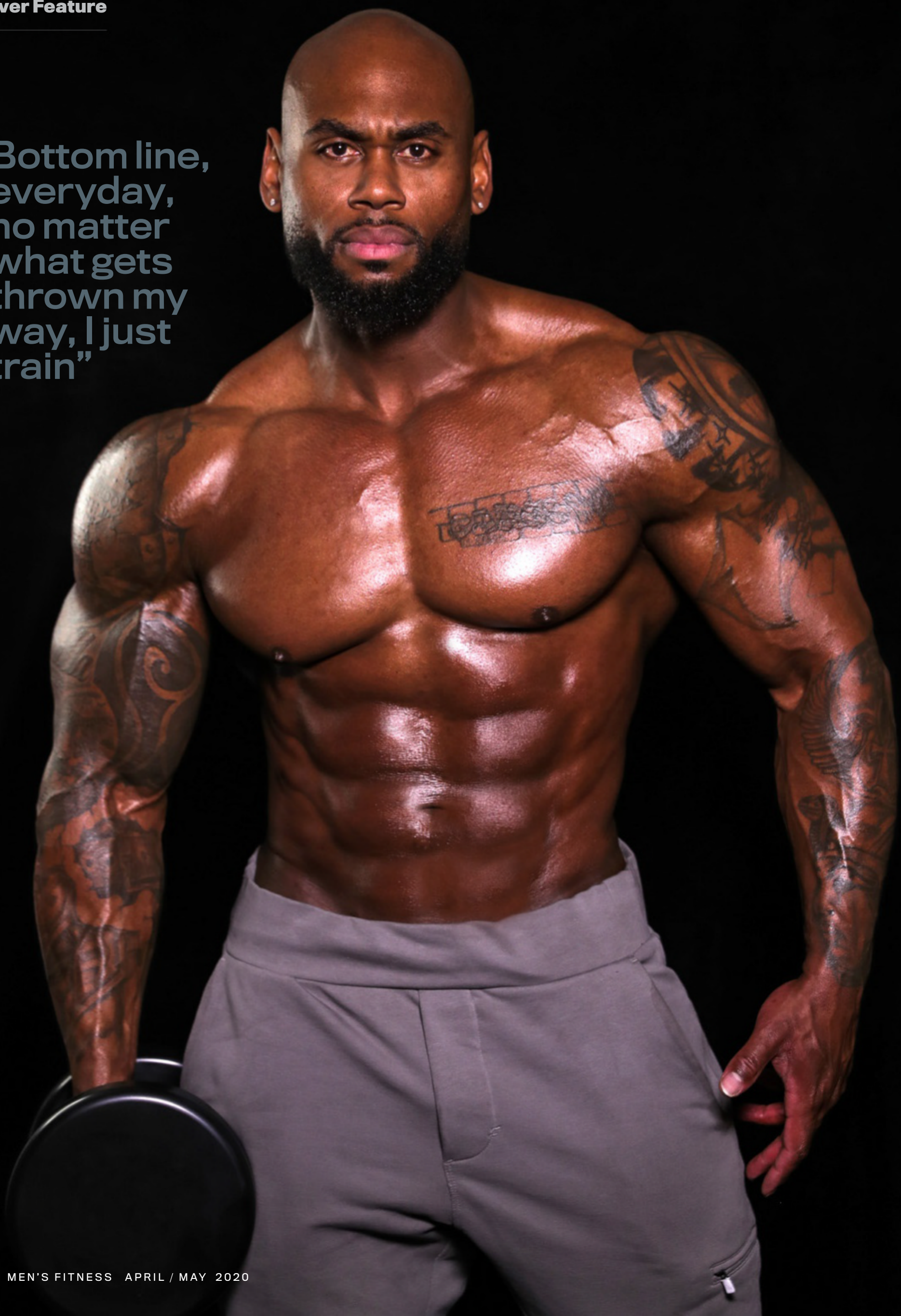
“Bottom line, everyday, no matter what gets thrown my way, I just train”



How do you stay motivated?

I don't rely on motivation – it's temporary, and too easily affected by things like stress and obligations. I've witnessed so many people put more energy into the perpetual cycle of finding and maintaining motivation rather than simply focusing on consistency. In fact, this is one of the first mental aspects I focus on with my clients, consistency and becoming fueled by the powerful results it brings. It's a simple concept many miss the mark on. Just like any other daily obligation in life, commit and execute! Bottom line, every day, no matter what gets thrown my way, I just train. Some days it's an all-out torture training session, others it's enough movement to stimulate the muscle and maintain. Either way, I commit to staying consistent in taking steps forward each day toward my goals.

What's the best fitness advice you've ever been given and would like to pass on?

Fitness is a vehicle that can take your mind and body past any limitation to the peaks of success. I took that, added relentless discipline, and applied it to life... and haven't let up since.

Instagram: @mrcalliet

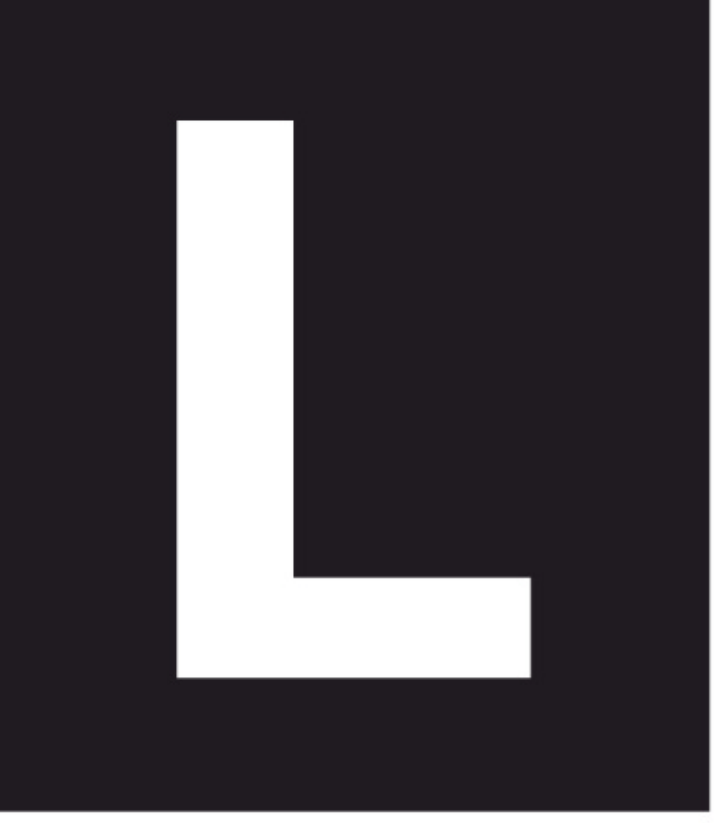
Turn back your

r body clock

Can you be a 45-year-old but maintain the body of a guy in his 20s? According to one world-renowned exercise scientist, the inventor of a proprietary formula that assigns you a "fitness age", the answer is: Absolutely. And it's going to change the way you train – forever.

By **Eric Benson**

Photographs by **Dylan Coultier**



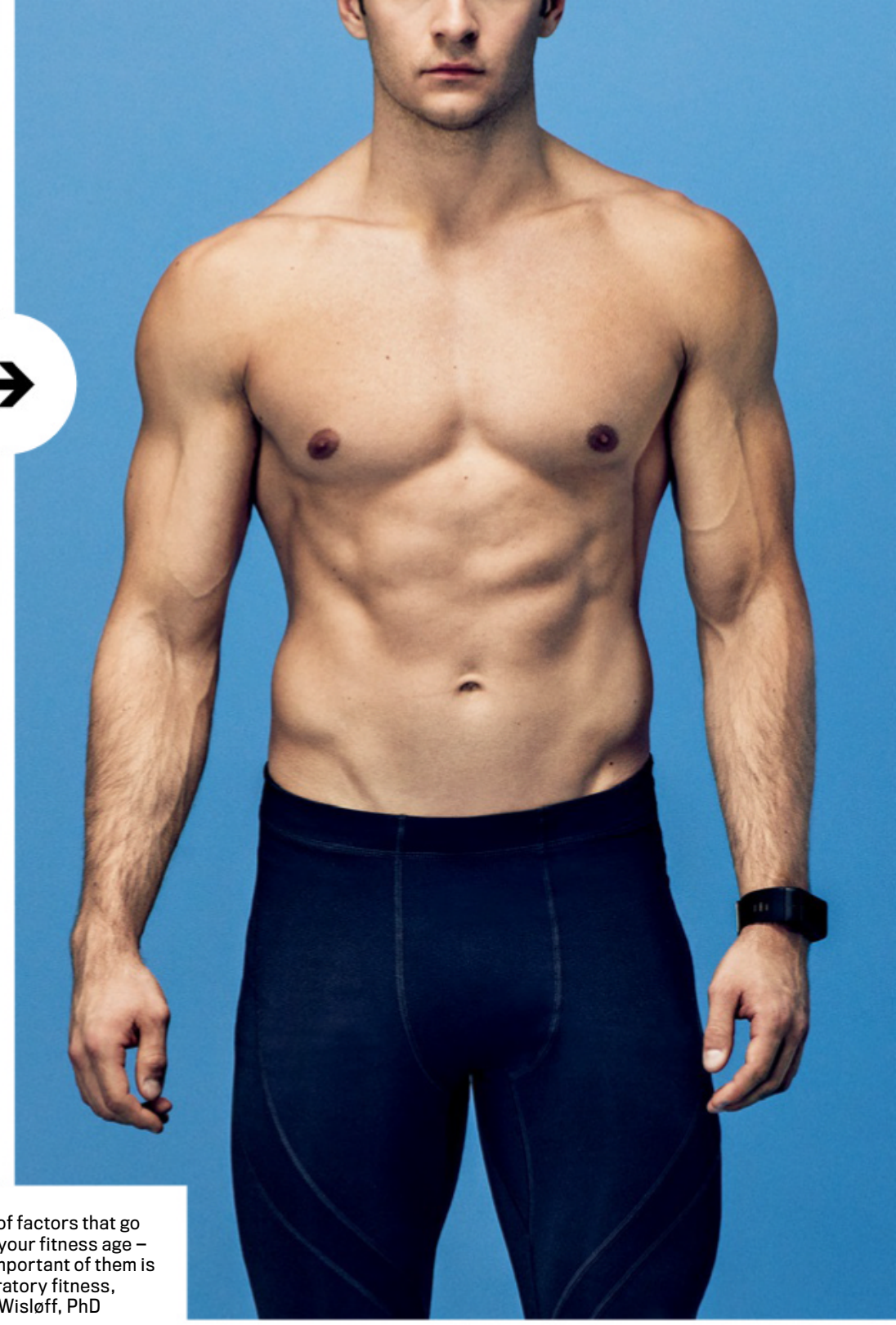
Like most fit guys, you're probably addicted to numbers.

Chances are you know your max bench and squat, and you might have a pretty good fix on your body mass index, too. If you're super hardcore, you might even know your basal metabolic rate (for the uninitiated, that's the amount of energy your body churns through when you're at rest). And no doubt if you're an endurance guy, you can list your PRs in everything from the 5K to a marathon. But before you get too confident in the story that these numbers tell, especially as they pertain to your long-term health, Ulrik Wisløff, PhD, a professor of physiology at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, has an important question for you: What is your fitness age? Wait, you don't know? Well, according to Wisløff, a 49-year-old former semi-pro soccer player who is also one of the world's top exercise scientists, that's deeply unfortunate. Because your fitness age — even more than your real age — is the key to providing confirmation of your physical prowess or exposing a gaping void at the centre of what you thought was a solid training program. What's more: Paying special attention to your fitness age, which you can maintain with a very targeted HIIT training regimen, might just save your life years down the road.

FITNESS AGE, DEFINED

Fitness age, which Wisløff introduced to the world in a 2014 study, is rooted in your body's level of cardiorespiratory fitness (CRF) — its ability to disperse and consume oxygen. In fact, having great CRF — not to be confused with cardiovascular fitness, which refers only to the heart and blood but not the body's breathing apparatus — is such an important factor to your longevity and your long-term health that a recent scientific statement from the American Heart Association described it as a "potentially stronger predictor of mortality than established risk factors such as smoking, hypertension, high cholesterol, and type-2 diabetes mellitus". But as Wisløff knows all too well, CRF is difficult to measure — and even more difficult to make sense of once you have it. The surest way of gauging CRF is to calculate your VO2 max, the maximum amount of oxygen you can process during an activity. (The average person has a VO2 max of 30 to 60, with some elite athletes, such as pro cyclists, reaching the 90s.) Since the Nobel Prize-winning Physiologist AV Hill introduced the concept in 1923, the only reliable way to measure VO2 max has been with an exercise test, which asks subjects to push their bodies to exhaustion on a treadmill or a stationary bike while breathing into an ergospirometry system. Even if you endured the process, the larger question remained: What does it even mean? If you're, say, a 34-year-old guy with VO2 max of 52, how does that inform your health and your training? "When we started this research many years ago", Wisløff says, "we always told people that they had a VO2 max of 30 or 40 or 50, and then they'd always look at us and ask, 'OK, well, what is that?'" So Wisløff set off to find a way to do two things simultaneously: 1) easily and accurately calculate VO2 max without the hassle of equipment, and 2) translate the findings into something the average athlete can understand and use to his advantage. Enter fitness age. In 2006 he and his colleagues began conducting an enormous study of cardiorespiratory fitness and other health indicators in 4637 Norwegian men and women, and devised a proprietary formula, which you fill out on his website, that assigns you a fitness age, essentially defined as the average VO2 max of healthy people at any given age. That 34-year-old with a VO2 max of 52? According to Wisløff's calculations, he's in fine shape. Generally speaking, the average healthy guy in his 30s has a VO2 max of roughly 49, so the 34-year-old's fitness age is close to his real age. But he could be doing better, and with the right training regimen, he could easily bring his fitness age down to something on par with a healthy man in his 20s. (Twentysomething males have an average VO2 max of 54.) But if that same 34-year-old found out that he had a VO2 max of 39? Well, he'd have the same fitness age of your typical 60-year-old. He'd be out of shape, with a dangerously elevated risk of developing cardiovascular disease and, according to some studies, cancer and Alzheimer's. But I know what you're thinking. "I work out. I run. I lift. Surely my fitness age is super young!" Well, not necessarily. When Wisløff began to measure the fitness ages of his test subjects, he encountered many people who looked fit and worked out but had practically geriatric fitness ages. One group of bodybuilders were lean and muscular, but "their fitness in terms of peak VO2 was very low", Wisløff says. When he tested amateur endurance athletes — many of whom trained up to 10 hours per week — he also found unex-

MANY GUYS WHO LOOKED FIT – AND WORKED OUT A TON – TURNED OUT TO HAVE GERIATRIC FITNESS AGES.



There are a lot of factors that go into calculating your fitness age – by far the most important of them is cardiorespiratory fitness, says Ulrik Wisløff, PhD

pectedly high fitness ages. That's because, as Wisløff has consistently found, great CRF is achieved through high-intensity exercise, not long, slow jogging. This has not gone unnoticed by Wisløff's peers, who believe his greatest accomplishment might not be in creating the fitness-age algorithm — a simple way to estimate VO2 max — but in devising an easy, efficient way to dramatically improve it. Carl "Chip" Lavie, MD, a leading Cardiologist and the author of The Obesity Paradox, told me that he revered Wisløff for expanding "our knowledge of the importance of higher-intensity exercise and its impact on improving fitness and reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease". When Wisløff pioneered fitness age, he didn't just create a diagnostic tool; he laid the groundwork for developing what might just be the world's most useful exercise cure.

SO DO YOU WANT TO LIVE FOREVER?

To calculate your fitness age, visit worldfitnesslevel.org to fill out Wisløff's detailed online questionnaire (and be sure to read "How to Calculate Your Fitness Age", on the next page, for our analysis of the questions). Once you've got your fitness age, you can supplement your training program with a scientifically proven fitness-age-reducing intervention. Even if you don't calculate your exact fitness age, you can still follow these six tips to boost your body's cardiorespiratory fitness, bulletproofing your health while leaving plenty of time to do all the activities you love: pick-up hoops, distance running, or improving those max bench and squat numbers inside the power rack. Whatever your goals are, here are the six ways to keep your body young.

STAY YOUNG TIP NO. 1:

SUPERCHARGE YOUR HEART

When Wisløff began to design a training program that could boost VO2 max and reduce fitness age, he asked himself one fundamental question: What limits the body's ability to uptake oxygen? Wisløff knew skeletal muscles weren't the principal problem — they can handle more blood than they can possibly get. He also knew that the lungs, while crucial, couldn't be dramatically altered with training. But the heart is highly trainable, and increasing the heart's pumping capacity — the amount of blood it can pump in a given amount of time — directly increases the body's ability to uptake and distribute oxygen. In other words, a more efficient, more powerful heart leads directly to a higher VO2 max. But how exactly do you train your heart to be more efficient and powerful?

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR FITNESS AGE

You'll need to fill out a questionnaire devised by exercise scientist Ulrik Wisløff at *worldfitnesslevel.org*. Here Wisløff walks a casual lifter and an erstwhile CrossFitter through each question.

BY MICHAEL RODIO

STEP 1

Where are you from? Ethnicity? Highest level of education?

WISLØFF SAYS: "We use that only for research purposes so we can compare Norway, USA, Japan, etc, and different ethnicities – none of this is used in the algorithm."

RODIO'S TAKE: I type in "Brooklyn".

STEP 2

Gender, age, height, weight.

WISLØFF SAYS: "Height/weight is just for calculating BMI, which goes into the algorithm. But gender matters a lot – women's values tend to be about 20% lower."

RODIO'S TAKE: I'm 26, 1.75m, 79 kilograms. I enter twice, because I accidentally type in my weight in kilograms the first time.

STEP 3

What's your maximum heart rate?

WISLØFF SAYS: "It's a common means of denoting intensity for endurance training."

RODIO'S TAKE: I had no idea, but the site computes it for me. (It's 196 bpm, apparently.)

STEP 4

Exercise: How often, how long, and how intense?

WISLØFF SAYS: "All these factors matter in a balanced way, but exercise intensity is the most indicative of fitness age."

RODIO'S TAKE: I pick "little hard breathing and sweating," because there's no option for "vigorous swearing or crying."

STEP 5

What's your waistline? What's your resting pulse?

WISLØFF SAYS: "A low resting heartbeat is the sign of a fit heart – world-class endurance athletes use it to see if they're ready for their next exercise session – but we do know that it's not enough to predict fitness on its own. Hydration can sway it, for example, so make sure you're hydrated when you take your measurement."

RODIO'S TAKE: My belt suggests a 79cm waistline. My Fitbit says 55 bpm.

THE TAKEAWAY

Even though I'm 26, with an expected VO_2 max of 53, I have the fitness age of someone under 20 years old, with an actual VO_2 max of 60.

WISLØFF SAYS: "That's not bad for a 26-year-old. It's about the same as mine."

Two factors govern pumping capacity: maximal heart rate and stroke volume. Your maximal heart rate is inborn. (What's the best formula? 211 minus your age multiplied by 0.64.) No matter how hard you train, that number will tick down throughout your life. But you can do a lot to increase the stroke volume of your heart. "The heart is like any other muscle", Wisløff says. "It must be loaded to get trained. And the only healthy way to challenge the heart's pumping capacity is to fill it with maximal amounts of blood for long periods of time."

The heart achieves maximum stroke volume when it's pumping at 85–95% of its maximum beats per minute. (For most people, the 85–90% range is sufficient.) So if you want to boost your VO2 max, Wisløff says, you'll want to work out within that range of cardiorespiratory intensity for as long as you possibly can. If you do it right, you'll end up with an "athlete's heart", one that's bigger, contracts more forcefully, and relaxes quicker. As Wisløff puts it: "You'll have a better motor."

STAY YOUNG TIP NO. 2:

FOUR MINUTES IS YOUR INTERVAL SWEET SPOT

So how exactly do you get your heart rate to the 85% threshold, and how long can you (and should you) keep it there? It usually takes more than a minute of vigorous exercise before you reach maximum stroke volume. That's easy enough to do — try running, cycling, or rowing really hard for 60 seconds — but the trickier and more exhausting part is keeping your heart rate and stroke volume locked at that rate. The key to mentally and physically sustaining that kind of workload, Wisløff says, is to use interval training. "It is obvious that one cannot exercise for very long periods of time at 85–95% of maximal heart rate", he says. "But intervals get you up to that needed intensity" and give you enough rest in between "to get rid of lactic acid that builds up during the interval".

But not all interval training is equal. Sprint intervals of one minute or less can get your heart rate past the 85% threshold, but they just don't give your heart enough sustained work at its maximum stroke volume. Tabata training with 20-second maximum-intensity intervals followed by 10 seconds of rest can work, but be aware that your heart rate drops as soon as you stop moving. (And the more fit you are, the faster your heart rate plummets.) If your goal is to improve VO2 max, then it's better to keep your heart pumping consistently at 85% of its maximum rate than for it to be yo-yoing from 75–100% of its max rate throughout your active workout time.

How long is the ideal stroke-volume maximising interval? In theory, make it as long as possible. (If you can push out 30-minute intervals at 90% of your max heart rate, go ahead and do it. Also, congratulations, your VO2 max is almost certainly spectacular.) Wisløff and his colleagues found that four minutes is a length most can manage. It lets your heart pump at its maximum stroke capacity for an extended time, and it's sustainable for untrained individuals and beneficial to elite athletes looking to boost their already excellent CRF.

Wisløff's recommended program is simple: A 10-minute warm-up, followed by four four-minute intervals of large muscle mass exercise (running, cycling, rowing, swimming) broken up by three minutes of active rest (a very low-intensity version of whatever you're doing). The results can be dramatic. After the seven-week program, Wisløff has seen spikes in VO2 max and benefits that go beyond CRF into weight-loss and lean-muscle gain. In Norway the response has been ecstatic.

"The biggest newspaper here [Verdens Gang] presented this program on their online version", Wisløff says. "That story is the most visited story in that newspaper's history. Now there are even training groups and training centres around Norway that are using this. It's used a lot."

STAY YOUNG TIP NO. 3:

DON'T TRAIN FOR A MARATHON

Ask a random sampling of men and women to name the kind of athlete with the best cardiorespiratory fitness, and

you'll almost certainly get answers like marathoners, triathletes, and Tour de France cyclists. While this may be true at the elite level, it's often not the case for weekend-warrior endurance athletes, and the reason is simple: Running, cycling, and swimming for long distances won't push your heart to its maximal stroke volume, so they won't do a lot to improve VO2 max if you are already in good shape and go hard for four minutes. "I know a lot of endurance athletes on a really high level", Wisløff says. "Even in those people we have been able to improve fitness a lot by exchanging two to three hours of running for periods of 4x4 intervals or even 3x3 intervals." Wisløff himself is a runner. He likes to go on 45-minute runs through the forest near his home in Trondheim, Norway. When he does, he makes sure that he is giving his heart extended periods of time above the 85% threshold by working in long, steep uphills. "I would like to say that low-intensity long distance is the best, because I like to do that", he says. "But it's surely not the best."

STAY YOUNG TIP NO. 4:

FORGET BEETROOT JUICE AND HYPOXIC MASKS

You've seen those heart-healthy labels at the supermarket, and you know that "eating clean" is a good thing for your health. So can you eat your way to a lower fitness age? Nope. "Indirectly, it's important to have a good diet, because if your diet is better, you adapt better to exercise", Wisløff says. "There have been some reports that if you drink beetroot juice or stuff with a lot of nitric oxide in it, that may help your cardiorespiratory fitness — and that may be true with untrained people. But as you get fitter, that supplement doesn't seem to work a lot." What about training at elevation or working out on the treadmill with one of those Predator–style hypoxic masks? After all, don't all the top endurance athletes run high up in the mountains? Wouldn't just living at altitude boost your VO2 max and reduce your fitness age? Nope again. The science on hypoxic masks is thin. "Even though there are

THE 7-WEEK ADD-YEARS-TO-YOUR-LIFE INTERVAL WORKOUT PLAN

Lower your "Fitness Age" with just two interval workouts a week

BY MICHAEL RODIO

You're a 35-year-old desk jockey with the heart of a 60-something couch potato? Join the club, Jack. But there's hope for you: Wisløff has created a seven-week program that primes your heart for a better fitness age – and burns plenty of fat – in just minutes of sweat. It's all built around Wisløff's lab-tested "4x4 interval training" workout: Four minutes of high-intensity exercise, followed by three minutes of active recovery, repeated four times. The core concept is to blast your heart to 85–95% of its maximum rate – not quite all out but intense enough that you'll be able to say only a few four-letter words by the end. Then you'll downshift to a three-minute active-recovery phase at 70% capacity – still moving, but moderately enough to catch your breath and scrub lactic acid from your muscles. The best part? You can do any kind of exercise you want – swimming, cycling, rowing, and running are popular, but anything will work, as long as you're pushing your heart to the limit. With just two of these 4x4 workouts a week, Wisløff's lab has made progress with everyone from untrained shlubs to elite athletes. After the fourth round, you should feel like you could have done another round. For Wisløff's seven-week workout routine, check out mensfitness.com/4x4plan.

some believers out there, I know that world-class endurance athletes in, for instance, some cross-country skiing do not use them", Wisløff says. While some world-class endurance athletes travel to high altitudes to train, the effect on performance is tiny. If you're the third-best 800m runner in the world and you want to become the best 800m runner in the world, then by all means move to La Paz, Bolivia (altitude: nearly 12 000 feet). But if you're something other than an Olympian, you're going to make the same gains if you do all your interval training in Miami.

STAY YOUNG TIP NO. 5:

SAVE TIME FOR CROSS-TRAINING

You might expect that Wisløff would advise those looking to reduce their fitness age to do nothing but lung-busting sessions of 4x4 interval training. But he knows personally that such a course would be counterproductive. "I can't just do 4x4", he says. "I think it's totally boring to do just that." In his fitness-age-reducing fitness program, Wisløff reserves days for fun runs and 60-minute activities like five-a-side soccer, and he practices what he preaches. He performs 4x4 interval training only a couple of times per week. (One session is always a lab-wide workout in which he leads his 60-person staff in exercises.) The rest of the time, he works out like an outdoorsy and not especially fitness-obsessed man. He plays a weekly game of soccer and kayaks. Wisløff views the 4x4 training as a key fitness intervention, something everyone should and can integrate into the fitness routine that they're already doing. "When I stopped playing soccer, and I got kids, I became more inactive. But when I started to become active again, I would do interval training two times one week, then three times the next, and that's a really good way to improve fitness quickly", Wisløff says. "It's an oxygen cure."

Stay Young Tip No. 6:

Choose Your Devices Wisely

By now you've probably realised that many popular device-based approaches to improving fitness just don't pass muster when you're trying to reduce fitness age. Walk 10 000 steps per day? Why? Your heart rate is never going to get anywhere close to a range where you can lower your fitness age. Exercise for 150 minutes per week? Sure, that sounds good. But what's your real output going to be? Heart rate is a better measure, but Wisløff realised that on its own, it didn't mean a whole lot.

"I've been struggling and trying to find how we can translate changes in heart rate into a meaningful index that actually tells me if I'm doing enough exercise per week to be protected against lifestyle-related diseases", Wisløff says.

What he came up with was a new metric called Personalized Activity Intelligence (PAI), which is basically Wisløff's fitness-age calculator in weekly-exercise-plan app form. Your PAI goal is to maintain a weekly score of more than 100. That's the point at which Wisløff's studies show that a man's risk of cardiovascular disease gets reduced by 17%. (After that point, you'll get fitter, but your risk of cardiovascular disease won't significantly decrease.) A couple of exercises per week that in total raise your heart rate so you breathe heavily for about 40 minutes will give you 100 PAI. You can get it also by exercising at moderate intensity for a few hours. The higher the intensity the more PAI you earn. It absolutely can be achieved by low to moderate intensity as well.

Daily workouts are not required. "The data is so clear. You don't need to exercise every day; you just need to have 100 PAI per week", Wisløff says. So super intense workouts like 4x4 interval training can easily be spaced out with rest days or days of low-intensity workouts, and you'll still be bulletproofing your body and health. By that point, you might even be able to compete with Wisløff. His fitness age, he told me, is below 20. ■

Ask Men's Fitness

Buffa-low fat. *Ostrich meat has as much protein as beef, but fewer calories and half the fat.*

I love a good flamed-grilled burger, but I worry about the fat in beef. Is ostrich meat leaner? And how do I cook it?

BEN R, JOHANNESBURG

You can't beat a big, hot hunk of Klein Karoo ostrich meat. Ostrich has as much as 21% protein per 100g, with less than 2% fat - making it the leaner, healthier option.

Ostrich is also readily available in many grocery stores nowadays, not to mention how tasty it is. And it's so damn easy to cook.

To keep it juicy, don't cook it past medium. Sportsmen, athletes, and health-conscious people with an active lifestyle benefit greatly from the high iron content, which also attributes to the rich red colour. Ostrich meat is definitely a delicious and healthy alternative to beef – and yes, they also taste good flame-grilled.

Food styling by Brett Kurzweil/Art Department

I just started a Bikram hot yoga class, and one girl in it is even hotter than the class itself. How can I approach her?

RAD D, CAPE TOWN

Ah, hot yoga is done at 105°, so she must be hot!

Some tips: "Don't try to get her attention during class", says Bikram Yoga New York City owner Jen Lobo Plamondon. "Yogis often do 'moving meditation', and you don't want to interrupt that. But afterwards, they usually feel so great they'll talk to absolute strangers."

Also: "No grunting in postures!" Plamondon says. "And no big meals within two hours of class — you shouldn't do yoga on a full stomach." (Plus, any al forte sound effects could give a whole new meaning to Bikram's "Awkward Pose".)

When you do finally chat, have some Bikram trivia ready to show her you're not there just to pick up girls. For example; founder Bikram Choudhury, 71, likes to say, "It's party time!" while teaching; also, he's facing six students' sexual assault charges in West Los Angeles. That should keep things lively.

And if you really hit it off, bring her a little yoga-type gift, like a water flask or a no-slip sweatband to keep the sweat out of her eyes. All the better to see you with.

Shorty the barber

Enlightened advice from grooming expert Shorty Maniace

I'm incredibly hairy, especially on my back, so I hate taking my shirt off in public. Should I get waxed, or even have the hair removed permanently?

EVAN T, PORT ELIZABETH

Are we talking George "The Animal" Steele? Wolfman? There's nothing wrong with being hairy, you're a man. But if it bothers you, you can wax it. There's momentary pain, but your hair grows back slowly. It'll last a week and a half or so. There are also places that can do it for you. There's nothing embarrassing about it — you're just taking care of yourself.

Or if you have a cool partner, get a good pair of clippers and have them trim it down. It takes 15 to 20 minutes and a broom. Especially if you know you're going to the beach, take care of that shit.

There's also a depilatory you put on, then scrape the hair off with a spatula. It makes you super smooth. That lasts about a week and a half too.

But if you're rich enough, get electrolysis. It's the best, and it's permanent, though I hear it can be painful. You shock the hair, and eventually it stops growing.

Just don't come to the barbershop and ask me to manscape you. I'm not doing it.

Box scores. *Boxed wine is great for outdoor fests and saves you cash (and headaches).*

FOR THE BEST RECIPES FOR A HEALTHY BRAAI, GO TO **MENSFITNESS.CO.ZA.**

Styling by Christina Simonetti; Grooming by Casey Geren/Bernstein & Andriulli using Bumble and bumble; Wine: Sam Kaplan

The Sex Files

Our experts answer your most intimate questions – no holds barred

I don't want to sound naive, but sometimes when a girl goes down on me, she sounds like she's gagging, and her eyes water. Is that just part of the whole thing, or am I doing something wrong?

PAUL N, CAPE TOWN

MOUSHUMI GHOSE: While this isn't necessarily part of it, some girls like the gagging/eyes watering thing because it's a symbol of submission that, for some – not all – men, is hot and arousing.

If she's okay with "deep throating", as it's called, go for it, but go slow and be careful. Gagging – a physiological reflex triggered by something unpleasant or dangerous – isn't generally something the body likes, so slow down, pull the penis back or out occasionally, and check in to make sure she's doing okay and not in terrible pain or discomfort. Deep throating can and should be done slowly, and with her leading the way.

DR AARON: I think for many women, putting a large object – such as an erect penis – in their mouth triggers a gag reflex. If you don't want to trigger that response, you two can discuss how deep to put it in and how gently or vigorously you thrust.

I'd classify this as D/s (Dominance/submission), since it involves power and aggression. Some people are really turned on by gagging; in fact, if you research it online (for scientific reasons only, of course), you'll find a large porn niche on it.

Are guys brutes for liking it? First, D/s isn't a gendered thing - plenty of women enjoy being on the dominant side too.

And second, sex is about fun and pleasure, so if you like it and it's consensual, just ride the wave and file any shame or self-judgement into a drawer – preferably under lock and key.

I think my girlfriend's reading my texts – how can I find out? And please don't tell me I should ask her, she'll just say I don't trust her

ALEX A., BUTTE, MT

MOUSHUMI GHOSE: If you don't ask her, you're not giving her a chance to be honest, or allowing room for communication and trust to grow.

If you want to stay in this relationship but you don't want to discuss it, then you have no choice but to trust her and let it go.

THIS MONTH'S PANEL:

WRITER/STAND-UP COMIC **JENA FRIEDMAN**

PSYCHOTHERAPIST/SEX COUNSELLOR **MICHAEL AARON,** PHD

PSYCHOTHERAPIST/SEX THERAPIST **MOUSHUMI GHOSE,** MFT

Ask Men's Fitness

Our sex life has gotten a little boring, so I'm thinking of spicing it up by renting a hotel room for a night for a change of scenery. Is that a good idea or just sleazy? And any suggestions for things to do there – jacuzzi, rose petals in the bed... bondage?

JAKE L, JOHANNESBURG

I don't think renting a room is sleazy at all. In fact, a change of scenery is one surefire way to add novelty and create some sparks, since your bedroom may have already begun to be associated with domesticity and routine.

As for what you do there, check in with your girlfriend to see what she wants. Maybe you require a little more adventure than she does – and that's okay. A solid relationship can work through these kinds of discrepancies.

DR AARON

While all these ideas sound enticing, you still might end up bored. Lust and passion take a dip after the first few years of a relationship; it's having a true connection that drives a couple to feel pleasure. Which really just means it has to be a two-way street.

Is she as into the sex as you are? If she's not, you're going to stay bored. That doesn't mean the relationship's over, but that it might need more than just a little spicing up. So focus on rebuilding intimacy, bonding, and heart-to-heart communication first. Then rent that hotel room.

MOUSHUMI GHOSE

I don't think a hotel room is sleazy. Then again, maybe sleazy is what she's into. So how about a 'cheap' hotel instead? Bedbugs, old oil paintings, grocery store sparkling wine, other people's bodily fluids, what could be more romantic? You'll never know unless you try.

Jokes aside, instead of worrying about your boring sex life, you should applaud yourself for sticking it out – most people leave relationships once they get even a little stale, so that's a huge achievement. So give yourself a break and take her out to celebrate: Steal a car, head to Harare, get arrested, and land yourselves in a Zimbabwean prison cell – talk about a change of scenery!

JENA

JENA: Well, it sounds like you don't trust her, but fine, don't be a mature adult and talk to her about it.

So let's have fun with this one: How about you text your most trusted friend some cool but also super-specific things about her, like, "I love when she makes me coconut chocolate chip cookies" and "She's so cute when she sticks her pinkie up my butt".

If you wake up to fresh cookies and butt stuff, then you'll know the truth.

30 ways to get the girl

We asked our sex experts for 30 tips for finding a keeper

Be authentic. "If she's the one for you, she'll be attracted to who you truly are", says Ginnie Love, PhD, author and intuitive psychotherapist. "So be yourself, and if that isn't enough for her, no worries – it will be for the one who finds you."

Think more about who you are than how you look. A person with positive personality traits is much more attractive to the opposite sex than the same person without those traits, a 2014 study found. So buff your character and boost your brain to win more dates.

Clean yourself up... In one poll, 85% of single women said they'd prefer a well-dressed man over a rich one. That doesn't mean a suit and tie, says psychotherapist Moushumi Ghose, "Jeans are fine – just add a little something to make it nicer than normal", like a cool jacket or a (wrinkle-free) shirt that matches your eye colour...

...but not too much. Skip the power shave: *Evolution & Human Behavior* found that women think a light beard or heavy stubble is sexier than a close shave.

Having said that: Ditch the bun and trash the 'stache. A man bun is kryptonite to 63% of women, and just 2% in a US West Coast survey thought a moustache was sexy. But keep the chest mat – 73% said they dig some body hair.

85%
of women think a well-dressed man is sexier than a rich one.

Give her an eyeful. If you have a little bit of game, use your eyes to get the green light: Glance down at her lips, and if she nods or smiles, that's a good signal you won't get a stiff arm when you make your move.

Don't freak out if you're not a muscleman. Sure, women like men with bigger muscles – if they're looking for a short fling, an American University of California, Los Angeles study found. But in long-term relationships, it's not a key factor.

Spiff up your social media. About 48% of single women check out their date on Facebook first, so get rid of any unflattering pics or posts.

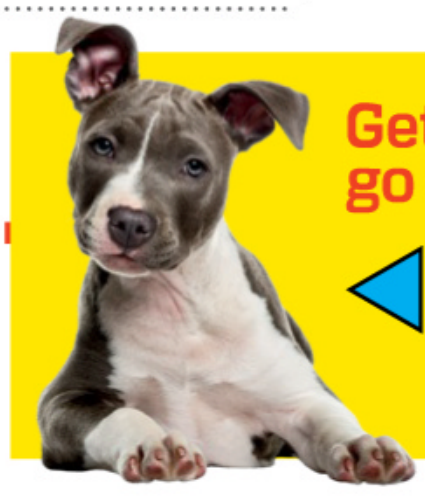
Get her laughing. 97% of single women say how funny a man is, is as important as how he looks; and a Psychological Reports study found that a guy's more likely to get a woman's digits if he uses humour. So steer clear of serious topics at first. "Think about how you are when you're in a playful, comfortable mood", says Ghose. "And don't be too sarcastic or too touchy. Keep it light and simple. Ask her questions, and definitely compliment her."

Don't play the role of a trainer unless you are one. At the gym? Don't correct her form or "suggest" how to do a move. Instead, offer to spot her, says author and Sexologist Susan Block, PhD. If you get a conversation going, talk about your weekend, mention your dog...

Find love on Aisle 9. The low-key, family-friendly vibe of a grocery store gives some level of comfort and safety, says Love. "If the cues are right, make your way over and introduce yourself. It's that easy." But skip anything canned (so to speak): One-liners like "Are those melons fresh?" get guys eye rolls, not dinner dates.

Learn (yes, *learn*) how to relax. "Take deep, slow breaths to calm down enough to be your best self", says Love. If that means mastering proper nose breathing – which calms you and makes your brain sharper, US-based Northwestern University found – it's worth it. (Try the calm.com app – it's free!)

Give her top billing. "It may seem obvious, but ask her about herself and she'll be more likely to feel connected to you", says Ghose. In other words: When



Get a dog. Then go to the dog park.

To a good woman, good dog = good man, says Block. Plus, right from the start, you know you have something in common.

Opening spread: Stephanie Rausser/Trunk Images. This page: Cavan Images/Offset; Istock; Opposite page: Arthur Belebeau

you're on a date together, don't aim to make her think you're the most interesting person in the room – aim to make her think she is.

Don't be a braggart. Got a fast car, hot job, sweet pad? Keep them to yourself. Wearing your heart on your sleeve can be endearing–but not your wallet.

Surprise her with surprising flattery. "If she thinks she's smart, tell her she's pretty", says Block. "If she thinks she's pretty, tell her she's smart." Keeping her a bit off-balance – as long as you're not a dick about it – will up the intrigue.

Know when to play the old-fashioned gentleman. Treat her right. Make her feel special. Respect her, says Love. And a feminist streak is great, but bury it when the bill comes: 77% of couples say the guy should pay on the first date.

Look for the linger. If she keeps close to you – even if her eyes or head is down – or she stays through awkward moments when it seems you've run out of things to say, you'll know it's time to make the first move", says Ghose.

If you're not sure, ask. No good at reading body language? Just say, "You're really beautiful. I'd like to kiss you", and wait. If she doesn't say no or run, go for it.

Like her? Don't play games. If you're genuinely interested in a second date, let her know right away, and try to make a date for three to four days later. Vulnerability (she may say no) combined with confidence (you're asking her anyway) shows sexiness and strength.

48%
of women check out a dude on Facebook before the first date – make sure your profile reflects you positively.

Know her go-to mode of communication. Does she consider e-mails and text messages tacky? Phone calls annoying? Find out, Ghose suggests. "That way, you meet her in her comfortable space."

If you cancel a date, reschedule asap. Consistency is key at the start. If something comes up, set up a new date right away, lest she think you've developed cold feet about meeting up.

Don't forget: Sex isn't a contest... It It doesn't matter how long you go, or if you come every time (though it doesn't hurt to try and make sure she does), says Love, "Sometimes it's about the closeness and connection".

...then again, don't be afraid to be a sexy beast. Once you're more intimate, says Ghose, "text her sexy messages that let her know you desire her". That's text, not sext – unless she starts it, keep your Anthony Weiner side on a choke chain.

Prove you're paying attention. "Do things that let her know you hear her", says Ghose. If work's stressing her, suggest something to help – a spa getaway, making her dinner, giving her a foot massage. She won't forget.

Be passionate about showing her respect. Let her know how much you admire her and look up to her, says Ghose. Keeping the passion up is all about respect, admiration, and appreciation.

Fight gently. "In the moment, men often forget they're larger and their voices are deeper", says Love. Keep that in mind in tiffs, and you won't come across as bullying.

Give her space if she wants to take a break. Just hit the bricks and see what happens. A breakup doesn't need to be final – but if you stalk her, it will be.

If you need to call it quits, do it kindly. "We all know when the spell's been broken", says Love, "when not just the attraction but the desire and communication are gone". But splitting civilly earns you good karma – not to mention good word of mouth around town (or the internet). And that certainly can't hurt in the long run. ■

Never underestimate the importance of foreplay.
Or, to put it another way: *Never underestimate the importance of foreplay.*

SURF AND TURF GOES GLOBAL

THERE'S NO CLEAR ORIGIN for surf and turf, the delicious marriage of lobster tail and filet mignon. Some say it was first served during the 1962 World's Fair. Others claim it debuted at the Continental Restaurant in Lowell, USA, in 1966. In 2020, surf and turf goes beyond lobster and steak – and beyond borders. So, with the help of NYC's Institute of Culinary Education, we've created these exciting new combos packed with international flair.

BY JASON STAHL

RECIPES BY CHEF JAMES BRISCIONE AND ANTHONY CAPORALE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES WOJCIK

Shredded beef & lobster “carnitas”

CARNITAS

PER SERVING

Calories 476
Protein 62g
Carbs 18g
Fat 16g

DRINKS

All drinks are under 200 calories.

Carnitas

SERVES 6-8

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1.4kg beef chuck, cut into large cubes
- 1 tbsp kosher salt
- 2 cups minced onion
- 6 garlic cloves, chopped
- ½ tsp cumin
- 1 tsp coriander
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp chipotle in adobo sauce
- 1 (410g) can chopped tomatoes
- 2 lobster tails or about 350g cooked lobster meat
- 8 tortillas

Scallions, jalapeño pepper, onion, coriander, sour cream (for serving)

DIRECTIONS

1) Preheat oven to 180°C.

2) Heat oil in a heavy-bottomed, oven-safe pan over medium-high heat. Pat beef cubes dry and toss with salt. Add beef to pan and cook until browned on all sides. Remove from pan and set aside.

3) Drain oil from pan, add onions, and cook 3 minutes over medium heat. Stir in garlic, cumin, coriander, paprika, chipotle, and tomatoes and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and return beef to pan along with any juices. Cover and transfer to oven; cook 2 hours.

4) Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Drop lobster tails into water and cook until shells turn bright red, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl filled with ice water and let cool 5 minutes. Remove lobster meat from shells and chop into chunks.

5) When beef is done, shred with a fork and set aside. Place tomato mixture in a blender and blend until smooth. Add ½ cup of the purée to the beef. If meat seems dry, add more purée. Fold lobster into beef mixture, adding more purée as needed.

6) Serve with warm tortillas, sliced scallions, jalapeño pepper slices, minced onion and coriander, and sour cream. If desired, pair with a side of grilled zucchini and squash scapece. (For recipe, go to *mensfitness.com/surfandturf*.)

DRINK PAIRING

Michelada

SERVES 1

INGREDIENTS

- Juice of ½ lime
- Celery salt
- 30ml beef stock
- Dash Worcestershire sauce
- Dash Tabasco
- 350ml Negra Modelo

DIRECTIONS

1) Rim a pint glass with lime juice, then dip in celery salt. Fill with ice and add beef stock, lime juice, Worcestershire sauce, and Tabasco. Stir well, then add Negra Modelo.

Eating lobster regularly helps reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease

CRAB CAKE BURGERS

PER SERVING

Calories 736
Protein 44g
Carbs 68g
Fat 31g

Crab cake BLT burgers

Burgers

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp butter
- 4 scallions, sliced
- · 220g lump crabmeat
- · 110g crab claw meat
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 cup flour
- Canola oil for frying
- 4 hamburger buns
- 8 strips thick-cut bacon, cooked crisp
- 8 slices tomato
- 1 cup arugula leaves

DIRECTIONS

1) Preheat oven to 200°C.

2) Melt butter in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add scallions and cook 2 minutes.

3) Transfer scallions to a large bowl and mix in crab, breadcrumbs, lemon juice, egg, and parsley. Form into 4 patties. Place flour in a shallow bowl, then dip each patty into flour to coat, shaking off any excess flour.

4) Heat a heavy-bottomed, oven-safe sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add oil to a depth of 1cm and heat. Carefully add patties to oil and cook until golden brown on both sides. Transfer pan to oven and cook 4 minutes.

5) To assemble burgers, toast buns, then add crab cakes, bacon, tomato slices, and arugula. Top with your favourite aioli (optional). If desired, serve with a side of patatas bravas. (For recipe, go to *mensfitness.com/surfandturf*.)

DRINK PAIRING

Plum Cider

SERVES 1

INGREDIENTS

- · 15ml simple syrup
- · 30ml chilled rice wine
- 2 plum slices
- Juice of 1 lemon wedge
- · 120ml chilled cider
- 1 strip pancetta, cooked
- 1 orange peel

DIRECTIONS

1) In a mixing glass, muddle together simple syrup, rice wine, plum, lemon juice, and cider. Strain into glass over ice. Garnish with pancetta and orange peel.

TIP

Use a triangle fold if the pleated fold is too difficult.

PORK & SCALLOP DUMPLINGS

PER DUMPLING

Calories 42
Protein 3g
Carbs 5g
Fat 1g

18+

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: brand new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

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Pork & scallop dumplings with ginger dipping sauce

Dumplings

MAKES 24

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups thinly sliced cabbage
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 120g ground pork
- 120g fresh scallops, chopped
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp sliced scallion
- 2 tsp minced ginger
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 package 8cm round dumpling wrappers

DIRECTIONS

1) Toss cabbage with salt in a large bowl. Mix well, squeezing cabbage with your hands. Set aside 15 minutes to let wilt.

2) In a separate bowl, combine pork, scallops, soy sauce, scallion, ginger, and sesame oil.

3) Remove cabbage from bowl and squeeze dry. Chop finely and mix with pork mixture.

4) With a wrapper in the palm of your hand, wet your thumb and index finger with water and wet the inside and outside edges of the top half. Place 2 tsp filling in centre. Pleat the top part with 3 to 5 pleats in the centre.

Bring top and bottom edges together and press to seal them shut.

5) Place each finished dumpling on a lightly oiled sheet pan and keep covered with a damp paper towel until all dumplings have been formed.

6) Arrange dumplings in a non-stick sauté pan and cook over medium heat until bottoms are browned. Add 1 cup water to pan, cover, and cook until liquid evaporates and dumpling wrappers are tender. Serve with ginger dipping sauce (recipe below).

Sauce

MAKES ⅔ CUP

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp minced ginger
- 1 tsp sesame oil

DIRECTIONS

1) Combine all ingredients in a small bowl and mix well. Let stand at least 20 minutes before serving.

DRINK PAIRING

Japanese wasabi cocktail

SERVES 1

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bar spoon wasabi powder
- 60ml water
- 60ml sake
- Juice of ½ lime, plus lime hull
- 15ml wasabi water
- 3 thyme sprigs

DIRECTIONS

1) Mix together wasabi powder and water, stirring well to dissolve. Add sake, lime juice and hull, wasabi water, and 2 thyme sprigs to a shaker half-filled with ice and shake well. Strain into a Collins glass over ice and garnish with remaining thyme sprig.

Wasabi is known to reduce blood pressure, improve bone strength and liver function, and kill cancer cells.

Shrimp & chorizo skewers with roasted garlic and white bean dip

Skewers

MAKES 24

INGREDIENTS

- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Zest and juice of 1 lime
- 1 tbsp chilli powder
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 24 medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 24 slices chorizo (about 1cm thick)

DIRECTIONS

1) Whisk together garlic, lime zest and juice, chilli powder, oregano, salt, and oil in a bowl. Add shrimp and toss well to coat. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. (Shrimp may be marinated from 1 hour up to overnight.)

2) Brush excess marinade off shrimp with a pasty brush. Curl each shrimp around a chorizo slice and thread onto a skewer.

3) Cook skewers on a hot grill or under the broiler, turning once, until shrimp are firm and no longer opaque at the centre. Serve with white bean dip (recipe at right).

Dip

MAKES 2 CUPS

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 rosemary sprig
- 1 (410g) can white beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup water
- 2 tbsp low-fat plain yoghurt

DIRECTIONS

1) Combine oil, garlic, and rosemary in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat until garlic is lightly toasted. Add beans and stir to combine.

2) Add water to pan and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and set aside to cool slightly. Discard rosemary.

3) Transfer beans and liquid to a blender. Add yogurt and blend on high until smooth.

DRINK PAIRING

Seafood Bloody María

SERVES 1

INGREDIENTS

- 60ml blanco tequila
- 120ml Clamato juice or tomato cocktail juice
- 1 tsp horseradish
- 2 dashes Worcestershire sauce
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp onion powder
- ½ tsp celery salt
- 2 tsp seafood seasoning, plus more for glass rim
- Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1) In a mixing glass half-filled with ice, add ingredients and stir well. Pour into a tall glass rimmed with seafood seasoning.

Shrimp and chorizo are complementary. Shrimp is high in protein and low in fat, which makes it low in omega-3 fatty acids. Chorizo, also high in protein, is high in fat and omega-3s.

RECIPES COURTESY OF THE INSTITUTE OF CULINARY EDUCATION. CHEF JAMES BRISCIONE IS THE DIRECTOR OF CULINARY DEVELOPMENT AND ANTHONY CAPORALE IS THE DIRECTOR OF BEVERAGE STUDIES AT ICE. **ICE.EDU**

TIP

Dip the skewers in the cocktail to add flavour to both.

SHRIMP & CHORIZO

PER SKEWER

Calories 63
Protein 6g
Carbs 1g
Fat 4g

Gourmet Biltong Boeries

Boeries

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

- 250g cherry tomatoes
- 1 glug balsamic vinegar
- 1 glug olive oil
- 2 red onions thinly sliced
- 1 knob butter
- 4 hotdog rolls
- 1 packet farm style boerewors, braaied and cut into 4 lengths
- 1 handful wild rocket
- game biltong to garnish

DIRECTIONS

1) Heat the braai to 180°C.
2) Roast tomatoes along with a glug each of balsamic vinegar and olive oil until just beginning to burst.
3) Remove and allow to cool slightly.
4) Fry onions in a pan along with butter and a glug of olive oil until caramelised.
5) Fill each hotdog roll with boerewors and top with caramelised onions, roasted tomatoes, biltong and a little wild rocket to serve.

DRINK PAIRING

Springbok

SERVES 1

INGREDIENTS

- 1 part Amarula
- 3 parts Crème de menthe

DIRECTIONS

The Crème de menthe is poured into the shot glass and the Amarula is carefully layered on top. Use the back of a spoon to ensure the colours don't mix.

BOERIE ROLLS

PER SERVING

Calories 642
Protein 67g
Carbs 26g
Fat 66g

Biltong is not only a great source of protein, it is also helps the body produce red blood cells and keep the nervous system healthy, that paired with cherry tomatoes which are also an excellent source vitamin C.

YOUR BETTER-BODY BLUEPRINT

Edited by Michael Simone

BODY BOOK

Battle ready

Build a body that's more than just a big slab of meat. Our three-day, ready-for-anything program (next page) is the ultimate combo of traditional lifts, hybrid modifications, and endurance challenges. Trim the extra fat – and keep it off – with our lean-eating meal plan, which is specifically designed for steady weight loss. And for your monthly dose of inspiration, check out a dude who lost 40 kilos – and increased his squat by 215%.

Unbreakable

YOUR READY-FOR-ANYTHING TOTAL-BODY PLAN BY MIKE SIMONE // PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES MICHELFELDER

Looking big, strong, and durable is one thing. *Being* big, strong, and durable is another. Can you push, pull, or carry something incredibly heavy? How well do you sprint, jump, or climb—and do you have the stamina to keep it up for a sustained period of time? Instead of training for the pump, use this program to take your conditioning to a whole new level.

HOW IT WORKS

This routine is built around foundational lifts, but with twists that are less conventional. Each day includes a unique challenge to break up a "routine" workout.

In Day 1, battle ropes test your endurance, burning up your shoulders, arms, and even your lungs. Day 2 you'll use the sled, a device that'll put your entire body on blast. Finally, Day 3 is arguably the most gut-wrenching: Front-racked hang cleans to walking lunges and trap-bar deadlifts with farmer walks will expose and strengthen any weak spots.

To be ready for anything, you need to take your body to the brink of failure and beyond. With this plan, three days are all you need.

Directions

Rest 90–120 sec after reps of 6 and below. Rest 60 sec after reps above 6. Do these workouts on non-consecutive days for two to four weeks. Do 10 min of foam rolling before the workouts and 10 min of yoga after.

DAY 1 | 45–60 Minutes

PUSH AND CARDIO

Exercise 1: Bench press. Tucking in your elbows will save your shoulder joints.

1) BENCH PRESS

Sets: **4** Reps: **10, 10, 6, 4, 4**
Rest: **60/120 sec**

Grasp the bar just outside shoulder width and slightly arch your back. Pull the bar out of the rack and slowly lower it to your sternum, tucking your elbows about 45 degrees to your sides. When the bar touches your body, drive your feet hard into the floor and press the bar back up.

2) INCLINE BENCH PRESS

Sets: **4** Reps: **10, 10, 6, 4, 4**
Rest: **60/120 sec**

Set an adjustable bench to a 30- to 40-degree angle and lie back on it. Grasp the bar just outside shoulder width, arch your back, and pull it off the rack. Lower the bar to the upper part of your chest and then drive your feet into the floor as your press it back up.

3) 3-PART PUSH-UP VARIATION

Sets: **3** Reps: **25 per variation (3)** Rest: **60 sec**

Place your hands on the floor at shoulder width. Keeping your body in a straight line, squeeze your shoulder blades together and lower your body until your chest is an inch above the floor. Position 2: Bring your hands close. Position 3: Place your hands outside shoulder width.

4) 3-PART BATTLE ROPE VARIATION

Sets: **3** Reps: **30 sec. per variation (3)**
Rest: **60 sec**

Tuck your elbows into your sides and alternate pumping your arms up and down, creating alternate waves in the rope. Switch to a double wave, where your arms move in tandem. Then move each arm in independent circles in front of you.

5) DIP

Sets: **3** Reps: **25**
Rest: **60 sec**

Suspend yourself over the bars of a dip station and lower your body until your upper arms are parallel to the floor. Add weight using a weighted belt or by holding a dumbbell between your feet.

Program designer Mike Counihan is a NYC police officer and personal trainer. **@nodonutshere**

Styling by Barret Wertz; Grooming by Casey Geren/Bernstein & Andriuli using Chanel; Fitness Tech: Jeb Stuart Johnston

DAY 2 | 45-60 Minutes

PULL AND CARDIO

1) DEADLIFT

Sets: **6** Reps: **10, 10, 6, 4, 2, 1** Rest: **60/120 sec**

Stand with your feet hip width. Bend your hips back to reach down and grasp the bar, hands just outside your knees. Keeping your back in its natural arch, drive your heels into the floor and pull the bar up along your shins until you're standing with hips fully extended and the bar is in front of your thighs.

2) BENT-OVER ROW

Sets: **5** Reps: **10, 10, 6, 4, 4** Rest: **60/120 sec**

Grasp the bar overhand at shoulder width and let it hang in front of your thighs. Bend at the hips and lower your torso until it's nearly parallel to the floor. Bend your knees a bit to take tension off your hamstrings. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and pull the bar to your belly.

3) SLED PULL AND PUSH

Sets: **4** Reps: **20 metres down and back** Rest: **60 sec**

Facing the sled, pull the straps taut with straight arms. Slightly bend your knees as you pull the straps in a row movement toward you. Then move behind the sled with your arms straight and flexed and drive it forward using slow, controlled steps.

4) PULLDOWN

Sets: **5** Reps: **10, 10, 8, 6, 4,** Rest: **60/120 sec**

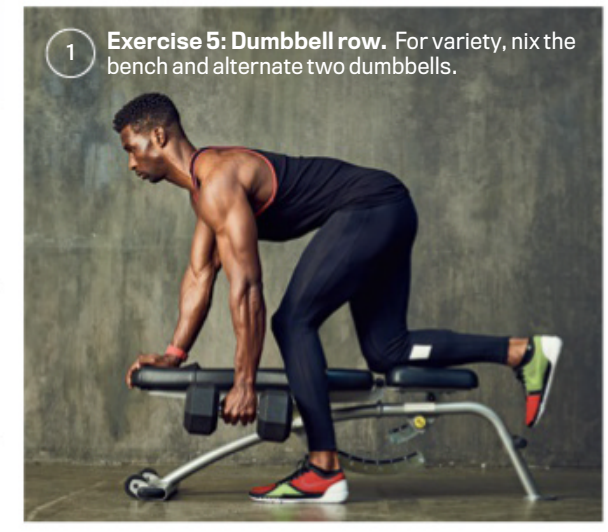
Reach up and grasp the handle at a cable station. Pull it down to your collarbone, squeezing your shoulder blades together as you pull.

Exercise 1: Deadlift. If you're having trouble with a slipping bar, try an overhand and underhand grip.

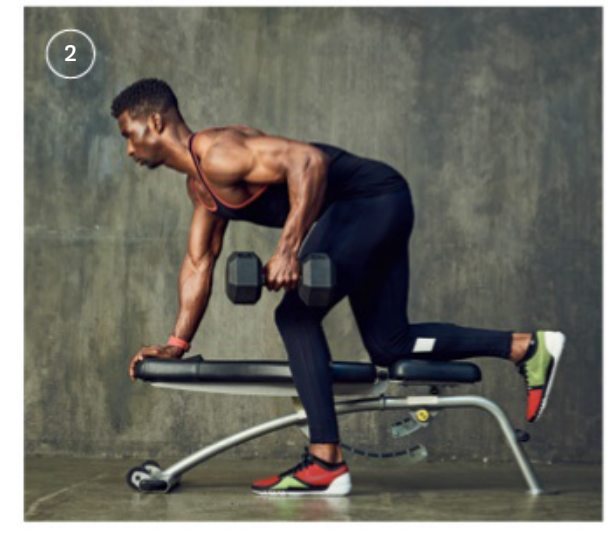
5) DUMBBELL ROW

Sets: **5** Reps: **15, 10, 10, 8, 8** Rest: **60 sec**

Rest your right knee and right hand on a bench and grasp a dumbbell with your left hand. Let the weight hang straight down. Retract your shoulder and row the dumbbell up and to your side. Squeeze your shoulder blades at the top and hold for one second. On the final two sets, choose a heavy weight and "cheat" it up, performing your reps explosively and with loose form. Switch sides with each set.



1 **Exercise 5: Dumbbell row.** For variety, nix the bench and alternate two dumbbells.



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Exercise 3: Sled pull and push. Keeping your weight on your heels will engage your legs, saving your arms from fatigue.

DAY 3 | 45-60 Minutes

LOWER BODY AND CARDIO

1) SQUAT

Sets: **7** Reps: **15, 10, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2,** Rest: **60/120 sec**

Set up in a squat rack or cage. Grasp the bar as far apart as is comfortable and step under it. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and nudge the bar out of the rack. Step back and stand with your feet shoulder width and your toes turned slightly outward. Take a deep breath and then bend your hips and knees to lower your body as far as you can without losing the arch in your lower back. Push your knees outward as you descend. Extend your hips to come back up, continuing to push your knees outward.

2) HANG CLEAN TO FRONT-RACK WALKING LUNGE

Sets: **3** Reps: **10 with 20 metre walks** Rest: **60 sec**

Holding a barbell at shoulder width in front of your thighs, bend your hips and knees so that the bar lowers to just above your knees. Now explosively extend your hips as if jumping while at the same time shrugging your shoulders and pulling the bar straight up in front of you. As the bar reaches chest level, quickly slip under the bar and catch it at shoulder level with your upper arms. Complete 10 repetitions. Then step forward into a forward lunge. Continue walking for 20 yards.

Exercise 2: Front-rack walking lunge. Foam-roll shoulders/triceps before this move.

Exercise 3: Trap bar deadlift with walk. For more of a challenge, try the suitcase deadlift. Place two loaded barbells side by side; lift and walk. The exercise has four points of instability you must balance.

3) TRAP BAR DEADLIFT WITH WALK

Sets: **5** Reps: **10 with 20 metre walks** Rest: **60 sec**

Stand with feet hip width. Bend your hips back and grasp the handles. Keeping your lower back in its natural arch, drive through your heels to stand up straight and extend your hips and knees. Walk 20 yards.

4) JUMP SQUAT

Sets: **4** Reps: **As many reps as possible in 30 sec** Rest: **60 sec**

With your feet shoulder width, squat down halfway, then jump as high as you can.

Pants: TRACKSMITH
Sneakers: NIKE
Tech: POLAR

THE SINGLE-DIGIT BODY-FAT PROJECT

To achieve the precise body-fat percentage that unsheathes your shredded physique, nutrition is key. With our sample three-day plan, you'll learn how to melt fat while maintaining muscle for the long haul. By Jim White, Photographs by Linda Xiao

The secret to getting that cut, shrink-wrapped look of a fitness model: Whittling your body fat down to between 6% and 13% (depending on how much you want your abs to pop). To do that, you'll need to cut about 500 calories a day and adopt a high-intensity resistance-training program to add muscle and eviscerate fat. (You'll lose about a kilogram a week.) Use the three-day sample eating plan on the next pages to ensure that the weight coming off is actual body fat – not water weight – then create your own long-term plan.

THE NUMBERS

THE GUY
80kg, 1.8m, 35 year-old active male

Recommended Baseline Macros

CALORIES
2100–2300

PROTEIN
1.7g/kg body weight = 105g–115g protein daily, 18g per meal (20% of total calories)

CARBOHYDRATES
288g–316g total (55% total calories)

FAT
58g–64g (25% of total calories)

Single-digit fat: Sample Day 1

WORKOUT

- Drink 500ml water

BREAKFAST

- 2 slices sprouted-grain bread topped with:

1 tbsp natural almond butter

- 10cm fresh banana
- 1 cup skim milk

MID-MORNING SNACK

- ¼ cup trail mix made with:

Raw almonds, walnuts, pistachios, raisins

- 1½ cups fresh pineapple
- 1 protein shake made with:

20g protein powder

LUNCH

- 100g pan-seared then baked salmon topped with:

1 tbsp BBQ sauce

- 1 cup mashed sweet potatoes topped with:

2 tbsp raisins

- 1 cup brussels sprouts, roasted

SNACK

- 20 whole-grain crackers topped with:
- 60g favourite cheese
- 1 cup strawberries, grapes

DINNER

- 100g grilled marinated chicken breast
- 1 cup tabbouleh
- 2 cups salad made with:

Tomato, cucumber, onion

*120g raw, 100g cooked

Salmon is brimming with anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids.

Supersimple BBQ Salmon

SERVES 1

INGREDIENTS

100g wild-caught salmon fillet

Salt and pepper

1 tbsp BBQ sauce

INSTRUCTIONS

1) Spray a non-stick pan with cooking spray and heat pan on medium-high. Season salmon with a pinch of salt and pepper, and add to hot pan. Cook skin-side down first for 3 to 4 minutes.
2) Flip salmon and continue cooking for about 1 minute, then flip back.
3) Spread 1 tbsp BBQ sauce on top of salmon, then place in a preheated 180°C oven. Cook salmon until medium (or your desired doneness).

NUTRITION
(PER SERVING)

210 calories, 21g fat, 11g carbs, 21g protein

Sample Day 2

WORKOUT

- Drink 500ml water

BREAKFAST

- 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese topped with:
  - 1 cup mixed berries
  - ¼ cup low-sugar, low-fat granola
  - 10 walnut halves

MID-MORNING SNACK

- 1 cup quinoa topped with:
  - ¼ avocado
  - 2 boiled eggs
  - 1 tbsp fresh salsa

LUNCH

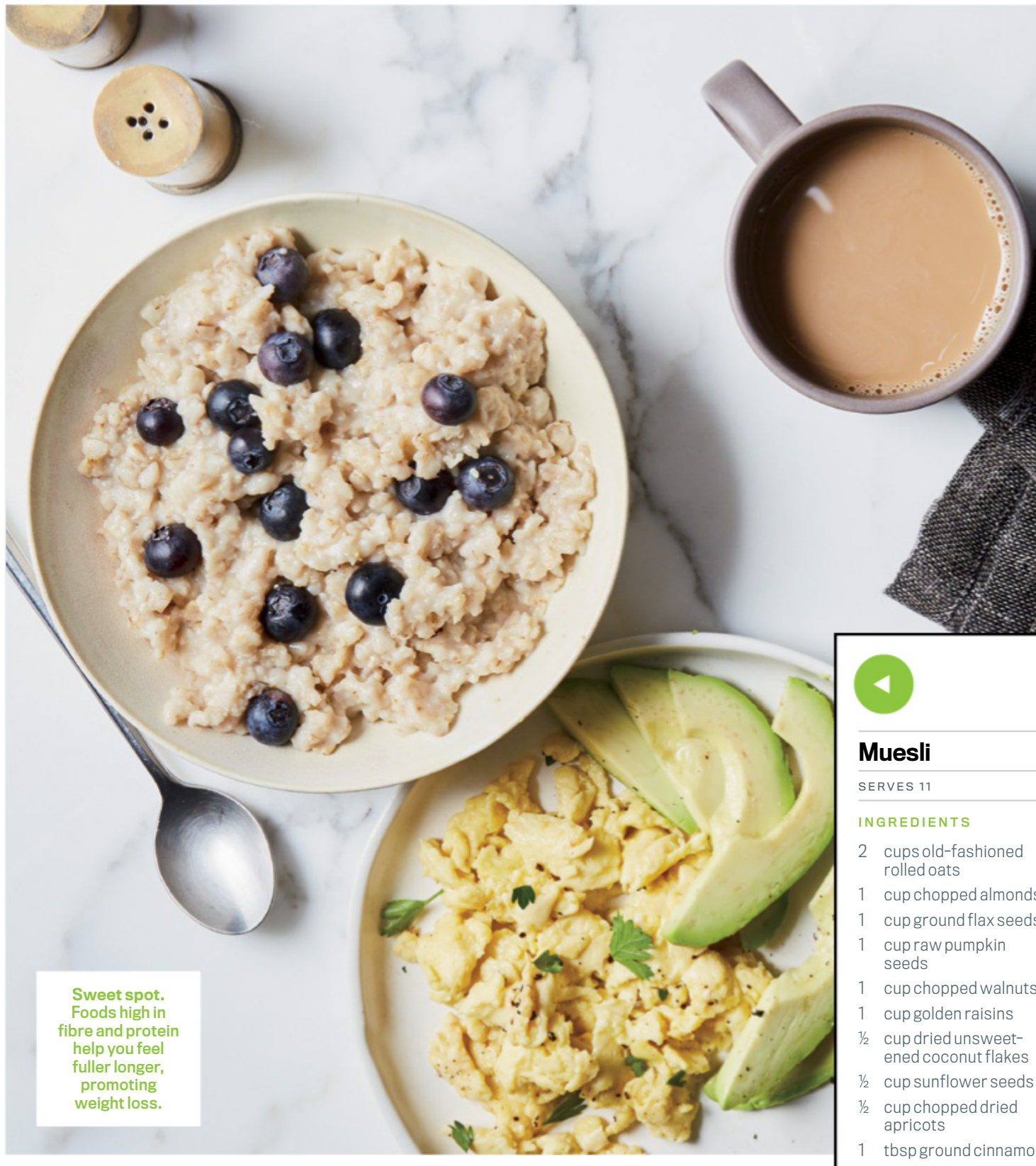
- Burger bowl made with:
  - 450g ground chicken
  - ½ onion, diced
  - 1 garlic clove, chopped
  - ½ bell pepper, chopped
  - 1 bunch Tuscan kale
  - Favourite spices
  - 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup farro
- 1 cup Tuscan kale sautéed in:
  - 2 tsp olive oil

SNACK

- Chocolate-PB protein shake made with:
  - 20g protein powder
  - 1 tsp cocoa powder
  - 1 tbsp peanut butter

DINNER

- 100g baked trout
- 1½ cups new potatoes roasted with:
  - Salt, pepper, fresh rosemary
- 1 cup asparagus, roasted



Sweet spot. Foods high in fibre and protein help you feel fuller longer, promoting weight loss.

Sample Day 3

WORKOUT

- Drink 500ml water

BREAKFAST

- ¾ cup cooked muesli topped with:
  - ½ cup blueberries
  - ½ cup milk
- 1 whole egg + 2 egg whites, hard-boiled or pan-fried, topped with:
  - ½ avocado

MID-MORNING SNACK

- 1 cup black beans topped with:
  - 2 tbsp salsa
  - 2 tbsp cheddar cheese
- ½ cup brown rice

LUNCH

- Chicken sandwich made with:
  - 90g chicken breast
  - 2 slices sprouted-grain bread
  - ¼ avocado
  - Fresh arugula
- 1 medium apple

SNACK

- 100g tuna packed in water
- 2 cups fresh spinach
- 1 cup wild rice

DINNER

- Ostrich burger made with:
  - 100g ostrich
  - 1 slice Swiss cheese
  - Whole-grain bun
- Salad made with:
  - 2 cups greens and fresh veggies
  - 2 tbsp vinaigrette

Muesli

SERVES 11

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 cup chopped almonds
- 1 cup ground flax seeds
- 1 cup raw pumpkin seeds
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 cup golden raisins
- ½ cup dried unsweetened coconut flakes
- ½ cup sunflower seeds
- ½ cup chopped dried apricots
- 1 tbsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Dash of nutmeg
- Pinch of sea salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1) In a large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients and stir.
2) Store in an airtight container at room temperature.
3) When ready to eat, portion out ¾ cup muesli and add ½ cup low-fat or nut milk. Soak for about 1 hour in refrigerator or microwave for 2 minutes.

NUTRITION (PER SERVING)

330 calories, 15g fat, 36g carbs, 12g protein

Boosting testosterone could be as simple as adding some of these powerhouses to your existing routine.

Power up!

Low testosterone can hurt everything from your physique to your mood to your performance in the bedroom. These three supplements may reverse it.

Fenugreek

According to a study in the International Journal of Sport Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism, Fenugreek helped to reduce body-fat levels and improve total testosterone versus a placebo in a double-blind trial. Additional research has also shown it could help to boost libido. You can get it in curries (it's used to flavour them) and teas, or as a supplement. (*novexbiotech.com*)

Ginger

This Asian food staple has been shown to fight nausea, inflammation, and even cancer; and, according to a study published a couple of years back in the Tikrit Medical Journal, it may also help to significantly improve testosterone and semen quality in infertile men. The best way to get more ginger in your system is through your food. Add ginger to vegetable blends when juicing in the morning, grate some into a stir-fry, or add thinly diced pieces to Asian-themed chowders and soups.

Tribulus Terrestris

Studies show that consuming six grams of this ancient root for 60 days helped men with low sperm counts to improve the quality of their erections and also lead to more frequent sex. It also reduced fatigue in the bedroom. Furthermore, these guys' T levels jumped by a whopping 16%. "Trib", as it's called, is thorny and bitter, so supplements are generally the best way to consume it.

1984

Blast your gut away

These high-intensity sugar-burning workouts are tailor-made to trim your body's flab by David Zinczenko

Imagine you're out for a walk in the bush. During this leisurely stroll, your muscles are using a type of muscle fibre called slow-twitch fibre. These fibres circulate the oxygen you take in, and with every breath, burn off blood glucose and the glycogen stored in your liver. You're not breathing hard, but if you walk briskly for 20 minutes or more, you'll begin to run out of glucose. To replace that blood glucose, your body taps into your fat stores. Now imagine you hear a crashing noise behind you — it's an enormous lion, out for blood. Suddenly you're sprinting, and even though you're fighting for as much air as you can get, it's primarily stored sugar that's propelling you. Your muscles are on fire as you burn glycogen like mad! Suddenly, the lion gets distracted by a leaping springbok, and you collapse safely in a heap. Your muscles probably feel like jelly because you've burned all the sugar out of them.

If you start thinking about burning sugar when you exercise, and not about burning calories, you'll see why short, high-energy bursts of exercise make more sense — you burn off the stored sugar in your muscles, causing your body to melt down fat in order to replace the missing glycogen.

The secret to cracking this seemingly impossible barrier: Exercise enough, but not too much. And here's how it'll happen: For six days a week, alternate between full-body toning and strengthening workouts (for 15 to 30 minutes) and cardio interval workouts (only 10 to 30 minutes).

The former adds the muscle mass you need to burn more calories and includes three sets of 8 to 12 repetitions of push-ups, dumbbell squats, and other exercises. The latter mixes short bursts of high-intensity activity with less-intensity "recovery" periods, a routine that studies have shown targets belly fat.

Every day, do this simple and flexible one-minute-in-the-morning energiser. This workout works with whatever energy levels you're dealing with, getting you in the groove to move more throughout the day.

One-minute energser on a stationary bike

EVERY DAY (EVEN DAY 7)

The three 20-second bouts of all-out effort, in between slow bouts of recovery movement, are all you need to gain significant physical benefits of exercise. You can also do the energizer on a treadmill or another cardio machine.

> **2 minutes** – Warm-up. Pedal at an easy pace.

> **20 seconds** – Pedal as fast and hard as you can while maintaining control and good form.

Don't hold anything back. At the end, you should be huffing and puffing to catch your breath.

> **90 seconds** – Recovery movement. Slow to a very easy pace. Don't stop; keep pedalling slowly until your breathing returns to a comfortable rate.

As you near the 90-second mark, start to ramp up your intensity again.

> **20 seconds – High-intensity exercise.**

> **90 seconds – Recovery pace.**

> **20 seconds** – High-intensity exercise.

That's 6 minutes; you're done!

Kick It Up A Knotch With These Training Shorts

THE NIKE CHALLENGER MEN'S 7

These lined running shorts feature mesh sections and sweat wicking fabric to help keep you cool, dry and comfortable during your run.

ADIDAS 4KRFT GRADIENT SHORTS

Stay dry while you stay active in these men's training shorts. Climalite fabric sweeps moisture away from your skin, so sweat doesn't hold you down.

ADIDAS ADIZERO SPLIT SHORTS

Focus on your stride over any distance in these men's running shorts. Its Climalite fabric will draw moisture away from your skin while the inner brief lining lends support.

SPIN MAG
BODYCRAFT

THE 500-REP CHALLENGE

TURN YOUR BODY INTO A FAT-BURNING MACHINE WHILE YOU TEST YOUR STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE

BY MIKE SIMONE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES MICHELFELDER

If you're the type who loves walking out of the gym drenched in sweat and shaking with endorphins – this one's for you. And we're not just talking about pumping up your pecs and biceps. This is all-out war – not a single muscle will go untouched. No "runner's high" can even touch the fix this workout produces.

If you're intimidated by 500 reps, cut them in half and go for 250.

HOW IT WORKS

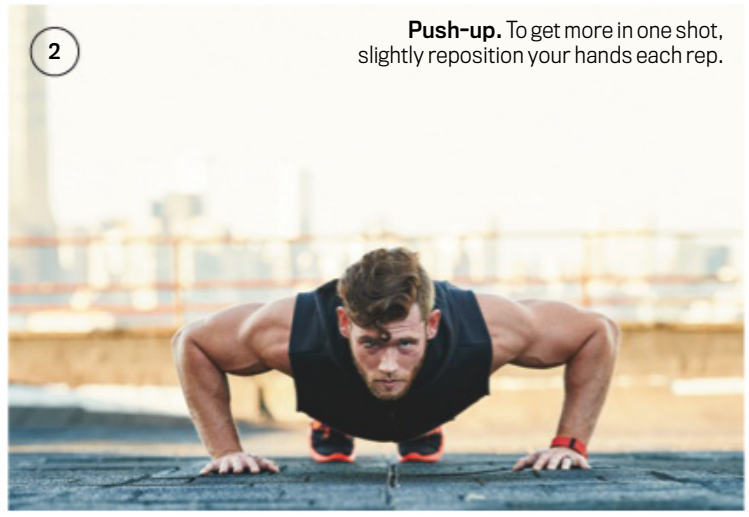
■ Move through this circuit one time as quickly as possible, completing 50 reps per exercise. Rest as needed. For weighted exercises, select resistance where you can perform between 15 and 20 unbroken repetitions at full capacity. It's suggested you try this in between rest days and after completing a normal program of four to eight weeks.

Hang tough

1) PUSH-UP

Reps: **50** Rest: **0**

Place your hands on the floor at shoulder width. Keeping your abs braced and your body in a straight line, squeeze your shoulder blades together and lower your body until your chest is an inch above the floor.



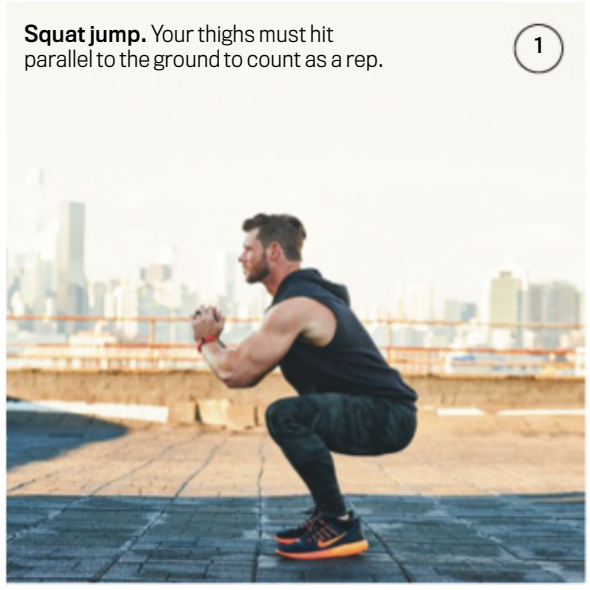
Push-up. To get more in one shot, slightly reposition your hands each rep.

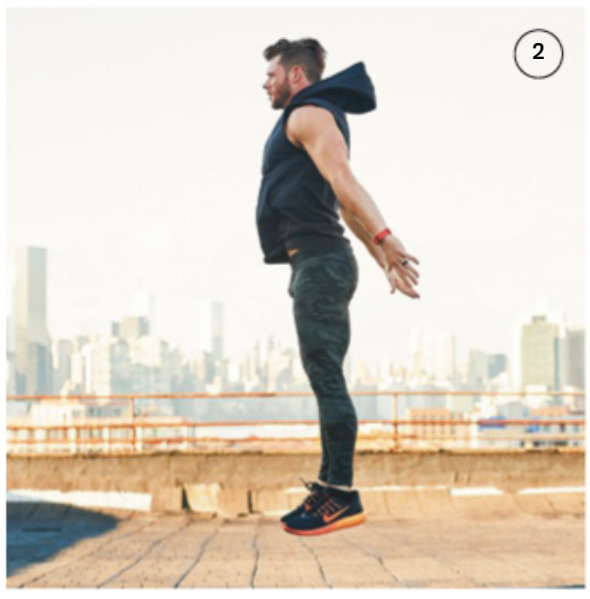
2) SQUAT JUMP

Reps: **50** Rest: **0**

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and squat down until your thighs are about parallel to the floor but no deeper. Jump as high as you can. Land with soft knees and begin the next rep.

Squat jump. Your thighs must hit parallel to the ground to count as a rep.





3) INVERTED PULL-UP

Reps: **50** Rest: **0**

Set a barbell in a power rack (or use a Smith machine) at about hip height. Lie underneath it and grab it with hands about shoulder-width apart. Hang from the bar so your body forms a straight line. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and pull yourself up until your back is fully contracted.

Dumbbell front squat. As you descend into the squat, squeeze your glutes.

4) NEUTRAL-GRIP DUMBBELL SHOULDER PRESS

Reps: **50** Rest: **0**

Stand tall holding a dumbbell in each hand at your shoulders. Turn your wrist so your palms face each other. Slightly bend your knees, then explode upward while pressing the weights over your head. For a complete repetition your elbows and shoulders should be locked out overhead. That's one rep. Slowly lower the weights back to shoulders and quickly repeat the process.

5) DUMBBELL FRONT SQUAT

Reps: **50** Rest: **0**

Hold dumbbells at shoulder level and stand with your feet shoulder width. Sit back with your hips and lower your body as far as you can without losing the arch in your lower back.

Styling by Christina Simonetti; Grooming by Casey Geren/Bernstein & Andriulli using Chanel; Fitness Tech: Jeb Stuart Johnston

6) RUSSIAN TWIST

Reps: **50** Rest: **0**

Hold a 5-kilogram ball with both hands and sit on the ground with your legs and feet slightly elevated off the ground. Extend your arms and explosively twist your body to your right. Twist to the left. That's one rep.

If you can't do the Russian twist with your feet up, drop them to the ground and bend your knees.

Hoodie: AMERICAN RAG
Pants: GAP
Sneakers: NIKE
Tech: FITBIT

7) PUSH-UP RENEGADE ROW

Reps: **50** Rest: **0**

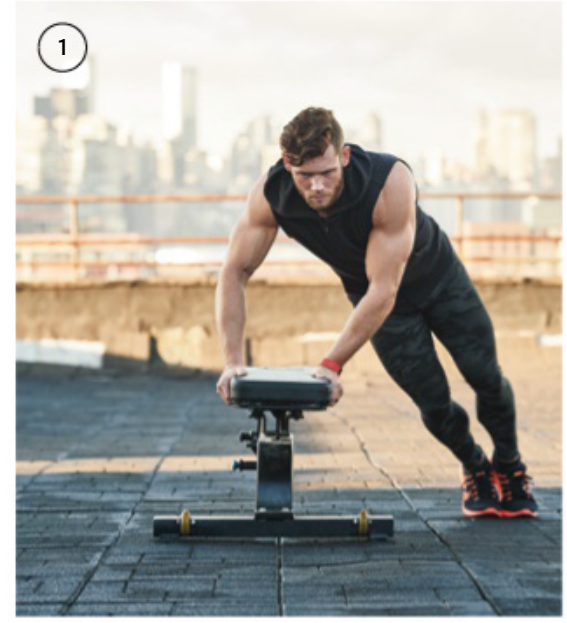
Get into push-up position with dumbbell in each hand. Perform a push-up and then, in the up position, shift your weight to your right side and row the left-hand dumbbell to your side. Perform another pushup, shift your weight to the left, and row with your right hand.

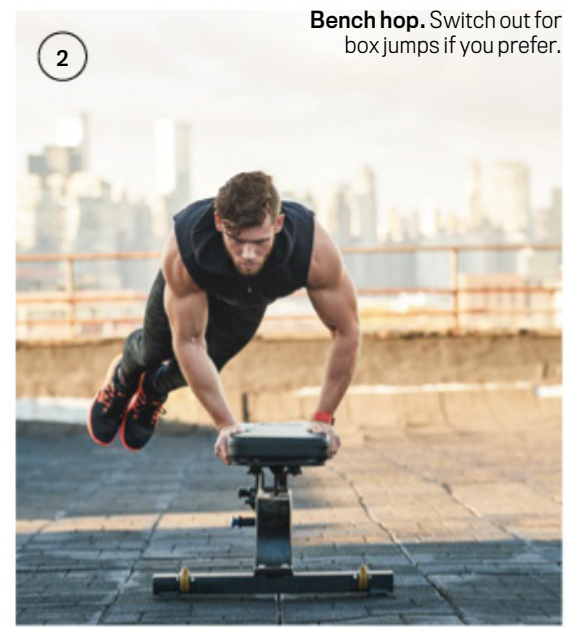
8) V-UP

Reps: **50** Rest: **0**

Lie on your back on the floor holding the ball with both hands behind your head. Extend your legs. Brace your abs and sit all the way up. Raise your legs simultaneously and reach for your toes with the ball. Your body should form a V shape at the top.

Push-up renegade row. Beginners can eliminate the pushup and focus only on the dumbbell row portion.





Bench hop. Switch out for box jumps if you prefer.

9) BENCH HOP

Reps: **50** Rest: **0**

Stand on one side of a bench or low box and hop over it. Quickly hop back and forth for the prescribed number of reps.

10) MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

Reps: **50** Rest: **0**

Hold the ball with both hands and get into push-up position on the floor. Drive one knee up to your chest and then quickly drive it back while you raise the opposite knee.

The hit-man plan

BULLETPROOF YOUR KILLER BODY

BY MIKE SIMONE
PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG INGLISH

John Wick has racked up 299 kills since the original film debuted in 2014 – not too shabby for a retired hit man. The staples in his repertoire include judo, jiu-jitsu, gun fu (kung fu with guns), and hand-to-hand combat. But it isn't just these skills that let Keanu Reeves-as-John Wick rip someone's face off with a roundhouse kick. No, what Reeves has – and you can have, too – is something that takes his abilities to a higher level: an enhanced sense of "proprioception", or a heightened awareness of where every part of his body is and exactly what it's doing at all times. The following workout features multistep exercises that efficiently work several muscles and body parts together, to earn you not just a killer physique but killer moves, too.

Styling by Jeanne Yang/The Wall Group; Hair by Nina Paskowitz; Makeup By Geri Oppenheim

Coldhearted circuits

MULTIPURPOSE MOVES AND A NON-STOP STRUCTURE ARE A DEADLY COMBINATION

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES MICHELFELDER

HOW IT WORKS

This is not your traditional muscle-building plan. Joint stability, mobility, injury prevention, and explosive power are its cornerstones. "Keanu's body was put through the wringer", says his trainer, Patrick Murphy. "I had to implement the safest, most effective program possible." To accomplish that, Murphy made heavy use of bands: "They can be easier on the joints than free weights", he explains, "but I also like the negative resistance they present." Other tools in the box are unilateral exercises like ice skaters and single-leg pistol squat hops, which enhance proprioception – the body's ability to sense what all its parts are doing – and balance.

Patrick Murphy is an L.A.-based celebrity trainer, *murphyfitness.com*.

2) Sync up your entire body.

Directions

Perform each circuit two to three times per week. Complete 15–20 reps of each exercise and then move on to the next exercise. That's one circuit. Rest one minute upon completion then start again.

Circuit 1

1) ISO LUNGE WITH BAND FRONT RAISE

Hold the band in both hands shoulder-width apart. Step on the center of the band with one foot. Step forward into a lunge with your free foot. Hold the lunge while slowly raising your hands to shoulder level. Resist the band as you lower your hands. Do 10 reps on one side, then switch.

2) ALTERNATING REVERSE LUNGE WITH BAND ROW

Anchor your band at navel height. Facing your band, hold it in both hands with light tension. Step back with one foot into a lunge. Row your arms back, elbows grazing your sides. Resist as you re-extend your arms. Step forward and repeat, lunging with the opposite foot.

3) STEP FORWARD AND PRESS PUNCH WITH BAND

With a band anchored about chest height, turn around so you're facing away from the band's anchor point. Hold the band with light tension. Take a large step forward while forcefully pressing the band forward. Resist as you bring your hands back to the start.

4) BAND OR CABLE PALLOF PRESS

With a cable handle or band anchored about chest height, turn sideways and hold the band in both hands in front of your chest. Step away from the anchor point so the band is tense. Press both hands out in front of you, keeping your shoulders square. Resist as you bring hands back to start.

Styling By Barret Wertz: Grooming by Casey Geren/Bernstein & Andriulli using Shiseido: Fitness Tech: Jeb Stuart Johnston

Circuit 2

1) STANDING LEG SWING

Balance on one foot. Swing the other forward as far as you can control, then backward the same way. Do all reps on one side before switching.

2) SINGLE-LEG BALANCE BODY LEVER

Stand on one foot, with both arms above your head. Hinge at the hips, extending the free leg back behind you and your arms forward so that your body makes one plane from fingertips to sole of foot. Use the standing leg to pull yourself back up.

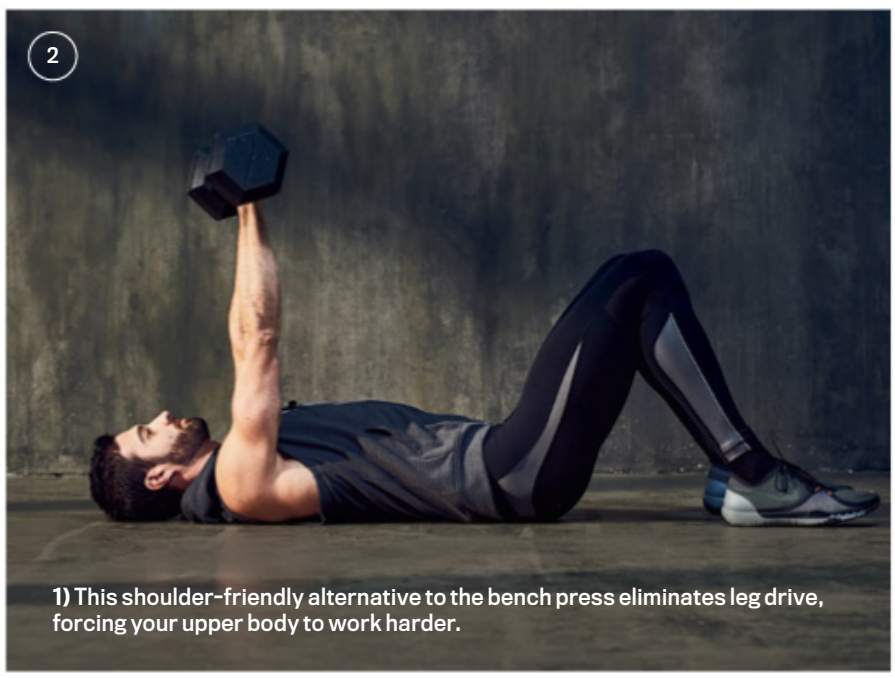
3) MODIFIED ICE SKATER

Start by standing on one foot. Push off that foot to leap to the other side and land softly. Quickly repeat the process in the other direction. During each side leap, tap your calf with the heel of the trailing foot.

4) REVERSE LUNGE KNEE-UP HOP

Stand with feet hip-width apart. Step back into a lunge with one foot. Drive the back knee up and toward your chest to explode into a hop off your other foot. Do all reps on one side before switching.

3) For a joint-friendlier version of this move, see description on left.



1) This shoulder-friendly alternative to the bench press eliminates leg drive, forcing your upper body to work harder.

Circuit 3

1) DUMBBELL FLOOR PRESS

With a pair of moderate to heavy dumbbells, lie on the floor with your knees bent. Hold the weights and lay your triceps on the floor with your elbows slightly elevated. Press the weights up above your chest. Squeeze and repeat. Resist the weight as you lower down.

2) IMAGINARY CHAIR CABLE HIGH ROW

Attach a rope or straight bar to a cable station set to the highest level. Holding a deep squat, row the cable down to your chest with your elbows coming toward your sides. Squeeze and repeat. Resist as you release the cable, maintaining your squat.

2) Holding form will activate nearly every muscle in the body.

3) SINGLE-LEG LEG PRESS

Set up the leg press for moderate to heavy weight. Place both feet on the platform so your knees are at right angles at the start. Remove one leg. Press with the leg remaining for a full range of motion, but avoid locking out the knee. Do all reps on one leg before switching.

4) SINGLE-LEG PISTOL SQUAT HOP

Stand on one foot. Extend the other foot forward while bending your standing knee and sending hips back to squat on one foot. Explode off the standing leg to hop up. Land softly with bent knee. Switch to the other foot and repeat.

Chest gains

A scary cardiac episode led Johnathan Fuller to improved fitness – and a serious change of heart

By Adam Bible / Photograph by Andrea Morales

One ordinary day at his job crafting titanium knee implants for an orthopaedic company turned very scary, very quickly for Johnathan Fuller. Out of nowhere, he broke out in a profuse sweat. Moments later, a sharp pain shot through his chest. "I was in so much pain", he says, "I fell down on my knees. I was really scared that I was about to die". The discomfort continued for five long minutes. Though not a fatal heart attack, the crushing pressure that all but stopped his breathing told him it was time to regain control of his life. Overweight with a family history of obesity and heart disease, he knew it was time for a change. Here's how he did it.

JOHNATHAN FULLER

Age:	28
Residence:	Southaven, MS
Height:	1.7m
Starting Weight:	118kg
Current Weight:	77kg
Total Pounds Lost:	40.8kg
Starting Body Fat:	50%
Current Body Fat:	12%

It's your turn

Do you deserve to be a *Men's Fitness* Success Story? If so, send before and after photos and your name, e-mail, and telephone number to us at **successstories@mensfitness.com.**

How long after the attack did it take for you to hit the gym?
It was about a week. My brother Joel and I went to one and joined on the spot. He helped to keep me motivated. There were some days I would struggle to get there, but my brother would push me to go.

How did your training progress?
I started going six days a week, just kind of messing around with lifting weights and mixing in some cardio. When I started seeing results, it helped me keep at it.

What kind of program did you use?
I actually picked up a copy of the *Men's Fitness Exercise Bible* to get started. I would go through it and find exercises I liked. Squats became one of my favourites, along with the bench press. Honestly, I started off at about 45kg for squats, but my max now is 140kg. For bench press I could barely do the bar, but right now my max is 90kg. And I couldn't even do a pull-up. Now I can do 20, strict.

What about your diet? How did that change?
It was the empty calories I'd eat — Oreos, fast food — that got me fat. I was really bad with soda. Sprite was my favourite, and I'd hit up all of the usual fast-food places like Burger King or McDonald's.

So what happened?
First off, I stepped up my protein intake, adding in more chicken fillets and eating fish like cod or sea bass. Going with the good carbs and staying away from the bad carbs was also key. I track calories now, and how many macros I eat a day. My intake is about 2800 calories, with at least 175 grams of protein a day, and my carbs are at around 330 grams. I haven't had a soda in three years. Now I drink nothing but water.

So guessing no more Oreo binges either?
Nope, no Oreos at all. If I do have a craving, I'll make something healthy like a Greek yoghurt cake sweetened with stevia.

What's next for you?
Right now, I'm trying to gain strength so I started doing CrossFit two days a week. Fran is one of my favourite benchmark WODs. I'm also still going to the gym regularly, and I'm also hoping to enter my first fitness competition next year. Long term, I want to make fitness my career path. I'm planning on going to school to become a nutritionist and chef since I really enjoyed learning to cook and eat right. Now I want to help others do the same.

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